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Track team need to work fast

It's now a race against time to get our track team fit for Rio. With just three silver medals from the World Championships last week, it's going to need a turnaround in the next 18 months for us to stand any chance of Olympic glory.

We knew there would be a slump after London 2012 but the 14-year low suffered in Paris was still a shock. Jason Kenny's first round eliminations from the sprint and the keirin were particular lows, not what you expect from the reigning Olympic champ. Laura Trott was our strongest rider with two silvers, but there was disappointment for her when the women's team pursuit squad were defeated; their first in four years.

Considering the broken bones, illness and lack of form, fortunes can only improve, but a second successive lacklustre Worlds is another blow for morale, which is perhaps more worrying.

Cue Sir Bradley Wiggins. BC boss Shane Sutton admits that his team needs "an iconic leader" and Wiggo fits the bill. On the evidence of last year's Commonwealth Games he still has the speed, but just as importantly his presence could provide the missing spark.

We too can play our part by supporting our riders at the 2016 Worlds at the London Velodrome in the last big showdown before

Rio. Tickets go on sale at the end of March.

Robert Garbutt
Editor



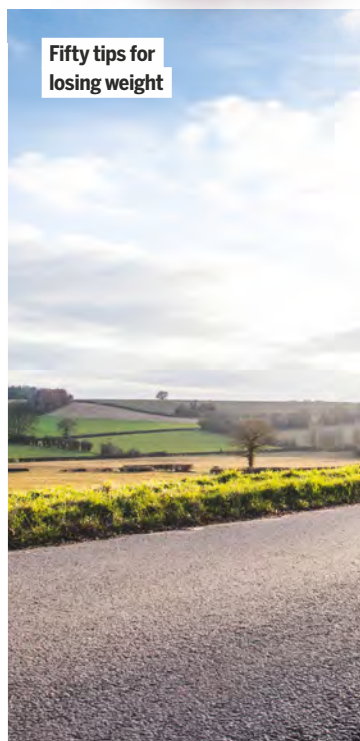
Photo: Daniel Gould



Quad exercises



Shoes on test



Fifty tips for losing weight

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Froome draws first blood

Brit edges Contador in Andalusia

Richard Abraham in Seville

Chris Froome won the first round of his duel with Tinkoff-Saxo's Alberto Contador last week as the countdown to the 2015 Tour de France officially began at the Tour of Andalusia.

The 29-year-old Brit took overall victory at the five-day race in southern Spain, also known as the Ruta del Sol, by the narrowest of margins; just two seconds separated the Sky rider from his Spanish rival after the pair had traded blows on two snow-capped summit finishes, taking one solo stage win apiece.

The result was the first time Froome had actually won in the presence of Contador since the second stage of the 2014 Critérium du Dauphiné, and the first overall victory against the Spaniard since the 2013 Tour de France.

"I wouldn't really hang too much [on it]. I know what work I've done to get here and I know I've got a lot more work to do before I'm in Tour de France form," Froome said.

"It's nice for the public and nice for spectators to have this duel between us [Contador and me] but this early on in the season we are fully conscious that our main objectives are a long way away."

With Contador working towards an assault at the Giro d'Italia, Froome looked lean and mean in Spain after returning to Europe from a block of winter altitude training in Crystal Springs, South Africa, with his new team-mate Wout Poels. "The weight is good, I've done all the exercises I need to do, I feel healthy," Froome added.

With its opening split stage followed by heavy climbing days in the Sierra Nevada, the Ruta offered a challenging introduction to racing for Froome, who opted not to line up with Astana's Vincenzo Nibali at the Tour of Oman (see page 18).

All four heavyweight Tour contenders — Froome, Contador, Nibali and Nairo Quintana (Movistar) — will go head-to-head for the first time in 2015 at Tirreno-Adriatico (March 11-17).



Sky's morale victory

Either Chris Froome or Alberto Contador was going to go fastest at the Ruta del Sol. As Froome said to *CW* ahead of the race: "Well, we're not going to draw, that's for sure." Yet if the Brit came out on top, the result in Spain was about as close to a score draw as you can get in cycling.

Contador took 19 seconds from Froome on the stage three summit finish. The following day, Froome took 29 back. Just eight seconds separated the duo in the opening stage 8.2km TT, in Contador's favour. At the final finish line the overall difference was a mere two seconds. You'd be able to find bigger differences in their gearing; on the fourth stage Froome reportedly rode a 38x32, while Contador languished in a 39x30. What a shame that Nairo Quintana — a late withdrawal to injury — wasn't there too.

Contador's DS (and former Team Sky DS) Steven de Jongh downplayed the significance of the actual result when speaking to *CW* ahead of the race. "If it's 10 seconds behind Froome, or 10 seconds in front of Froome, we know what we did and we know where we can improve," he said.

Nevertheless, amidst the warming up of the cold war between cycling's two big budget superpowers, Sky and Tinkoff-Saxo, those two seconds could prove more important than you'd expect. After a Sky brain drain (staff Sean Yates and coach Bobby Julich are also now wearing hi-vis yellow after leaving black and blue in 2012) and the sabre-rattling in the peloton, you try telling them that this win doesn't matter.

"There's always that psychological battle," said Nicolas Roche, who swapped Tinkoff for Sky over the winter. "It's always a strong point to win the first races early on in the year, to show that you're ready and you're not chasing form and not behind.

"I've been in situations, like with Ag2r in 2011, where the first victory happened late May. There was so much stress and pressure and it creates a kind of bad atmosphere in the team, and it's just so much easier and enjoyable when you start off on the right foot and keep the rhythm going."



Froome won the first battle of the season-long war

Thomas sends out warning with Algarve win

Welshman looking good for Paris-Nice

Richard Abraham

Geraint Thomas is primed for Paris-Nice after cementing his stage race credentials with overall victory at the Tour of the Algarve last week.

The 28-year-old Welshman took the race lead after a solo stage win on stage two, attacking from the bunch on the final climb, flying past Rein Taaramäe (Astana) and descending solo to the finish.

Thomas held off the best efforts of world champion Michal Kwiatkowski (Etixx-Quick Step), first with an impressive performance against the clock; the Welshman ceded just three seconds to stage winner Tony Martin over the 19km time trial on stage three, finishing third. He then finished fourth, just behind Kwiatkowski and team-mate Richie Porte when the Tasmanian won the hilltop finish on stage four.

"We knew he was up for it,

and this performance is what you'd expect from G now," Team Sky's head of performance Rod Ellingworth told *Cycling Weekly*.

"All signs during the winter were that he was ahead of where he was last year. We'll be going into Paris-Nice [March 8-15] with a good chance of winning the overall; we've got a pretty strong team."

Thomas was sitting second overall at last year's Paris-Nice before crashing out of contention on the penultimate stage. This year's course features a summit finish on stage four and the return of the traditional 9.6km Col d'Eze uphill time trial, a parcours which appears well suited to Thomas's skills.

"G's ambition is to be a proper GC rider in the Grand Tours, so you'd expect him to climb well and be time trialling well," Ellingworth added. "He'll now put in a little bit more quality conditioning down in Monaco with [coach] Tim Kerrison leading into Paris-Nice."



MY VIEW...

Hugh Gladstone

Cycling Weekly news editor

We've seen Geraint Thomas both in early-season form and winning stage races before only to have his momentum stalled by untimely mishaps. But his Algarve win was a powerful performance. Could this be the year he steps up another level?





Weekly column **Rob Hayles**



“It dawned on me that the public’s perception of Skoda was not too dissimilar to Great Britain’s image within cycling”

As I write, I’m on a flight to Prague on behalf of one of cycling’s long-standing supporters. Skoda’s sponsorship over the last decade or so has made the brand synonymous with the sport and some of our greatest races.

While doing a bit of research, I found out that before Skoda even thought about designing cars, they were toying around with two wheels rather than four. In fact, back in the late 1800s one of the original founders of the company lost his front teeth while on a test ride of a motorised bicycle.

While I was looking through the history of the cars Skoda has produced over the years, it dawned on me that the company’s standing within the motor industry and public perception was very similar to Great Britain’s image within world cycling.

I can still remember the look of shame every morning on a fellow school pupil’s face as he was forced out of his parents’ bright orange Skoda Rapid. I’m sure he would have rather walked, but his mum seemed to insist on dropping him right outside the gates. Skoda jokes seemed to be an integral part of day-to-day parlance. And this one lad took the brunt of them.

But what on earth has Skoda’s reputation got to do with British cycling, you may well ask. Well, not so many years ago, our nation was also not seen in so great a light on the world stage. Of course there were a few exceptions to that rule, but in general we were not considered part of the ‘community’. Not that myself or my team-mates shared the embarrassment of the Skoda lad when we’d pull on the GB jersey. Far from it. Well, except for maybe that green one we had back in 1999. No! We were honoured and proud, as I’m sure were the Skoda workforce back in the day. But for all the hard work, the fruits of our labour came to very little.

Fast forward a few years, and look at the difference. Whether it be international bike races, or motoring awards, the accolades come thick and fast.

No longer are we a cycling nation of minnows. And I can’t remember the last time I was asked: “What do you call a Skoda with twin exhaust pipes?”*

Long may it continue.

* a wheelbarrow

Former double world track champion, Rob Hayles is a pundit for TV and radio. He’s also a coffee connoisseur and garden shed inventor



Cold weather wreaks havoc

Arctic winds, black ice and hypothermia cause early-season mayhem

Hugh Gladstone

Cold conditions took their toll on some of last weekend's biggest domestic events, forcing the cancellation of the North Road Hardriders time trial and seeing one rider treated for hypothermia at the Clayton Velo handicap road race (pictured).

"Quite a few riders suffered with the cold conditions," said Clayton organiser Peter Boast. "There was an icy breeze that picked up in the last half of the race

and a bit of sleet and snow."

While most were able to warm up again back at race HQ, the lone female entrant, Rebecca Rimmington, was still shaking 45 minutes after she had crossed the line.

"When I stopped I couldn't feel my hands," the Ikon-Mazda rider said. "I've been cold before but this was all a bit uncontrollable.

"Luckily one of the guys in the race was a medic and was able to help wrap me up."

The 58-mile Lancashire event was won by One Pro Cycling rider Pete Williams after he eventually caught a strong group of junior front-markers.

The day Hell froze over

In Hertfordshire, an overnight freeze combined with heavy rain over the previous two days made some sections of the undulating and twisting North Road course unrideable. Organiser Neil Lewis had contemplated delaying the start and shortening the route but



Sandstorm causes chaos in Oman

Nick Bull in Muscat

Riders stepped up pressure on the UCI to introduce new extreme weather guidelines following last Saturday's chaotic fifth Tour of Oman stage.

A sandstorm that greeted riders at the start at Al Sawadi forced organisers to shorten the stage, before a number of tyre blow-outs, seemingly caused by temperatures of 45°C at the relocated *départ* Al Wazarat, prompted riders to call proceedings to a halt within minutes of the roll-out.

The majority of the blow-outs affected the second division Bardiani-CSF squad, although one tyre — believed to belong to a different team's rider — audibly deflated during the stoppage.

"This could be an important day for cycling," said Tom Boonen. "It's good that everyone is pulling in the same direction. No-one wants to risk their life."

In a statement released on Saturday evening, the UCI said: "We are currently working with key stakeholders to agree protocols to be adopted if a race is affected by extreme weather. We intend to have this approved very quickly as we are conscious of the need for clear guidelines on this issue."

However, the issue of weather-related race neutralisations remains contentious. Three senior professionals approached by *CW* about the issue declined to comment on it, while BMC's Tejay van Garderen, who finished second overall in Oman, bemoaned Saturday's events.

"I think it was just an isolated team with bad equipment who affected everyone's ability to race," he said. "I think we would have been fine."

Eddy Merckx, the race's co-organiser, also criticised the decision not to race, saying: "When it rains in the Pyrenees and in Paris-Roubaix it is also dangerous. But the riders don't climb off their bikes then, do they?"

when he heard that a marshal's car had skidded on black ice while putting out warning signs, he made the call to cancel. It was the fourth time that the early-season classic has been called off in its 56-year history.

"Although this year's Hardriders will not be rescheduled, I'm considering promoting a summer classic on the same roads," Lewis told *CW*.

Meanwhile in Kent, the Hell of

the Ashdown sportive froze over, causing the promoting Catford CC to delay the start by 45 minutes due to sheet ice on the course. Of 1,200 entries only 740 turned up — an effect organiser Steve Airey said they have seen previously when bad weather has struck.

Airey added that one rider who decided to defy the delayed start sheepishly returned to the HQ after falling off on ice at Toys Hill.

■ Racing round-up on page 68.



LAST WEEK

Monday Feb 16

Reports circulated that Alberto Contador, 32, had announced he would retire after the 2016 season. Contador, who finished second at the Ruta del Sol on Sunday, said: "Next year I'll be in the squad, but it will be the last," according to Spanish newspaper *AS*.

Tuesday Feb 17

Joanna Rowsell threw her name into the hat for the Hour record after the Olympics. She told Sky Sports: "It's definitely something that interests me."



Wednesday Feb 18

Dan McLay didn't wait long to get his first professional win for his new Bretagne-Séché Environnement team; the 23-year-old won stage three of the Tropicale Amissa Bongo in Gabon in a bunch sprint.

Thursday Feb 19

Thirteen out of 18 teams at this year's Tour of Oman were fined for littering during stage three of the race. IAM's DS Eddy Seigneur received the greatest fine, 450 CHF, for nine discarded bottles.

Friday Feb 20

The Peak District is to get a £260,000 grant from the Department of Transport to make it more accessible to leisure cyclists, it was announced.

Saturday Feb 21

UCI president Brian Cookson braced the cycling world for bad news ahead of an upcoming report on historic doping and corruption in the sport. "When you open a can of worms you find a lot of worms," Cookson said.



Sunday Feb 22

Danish team Cult Energy were forced to abandon the Tour du Haut Var after thieves stole bikes and equipment from a team truck. Last year Team Sky had 16 bikes stolen at the same race.

Obituary Claude Criquielion

Classics ace and former world champ dies at 58

Claude Criquielion, who died following a stroke last week aged 58, was the last of a racing breed — a single-day specialist who could win almost any Classic. He was at his best in the hills: long or short, cobbled or smooth, it didn't matter, Criquielion was master of them all. You don't see that today in this age of ultra-specialisation.

In 1987 Criquielion became one of only a handful of French-speaking Belgians to win the Tour of Flanders. But although he was a Walloon by birth, Criquielion was Flemish in spirit. He was born in Lessines and lived in Deux-Acren, so close to the Flemish border it is just five miles south of Geraardsbergen and the famous Muur, the penultimate climb of the Tour of Flanders when he won it.

Criquielion trained in the Flemish Ardennes, but said his biggest regret was not winning the Doyenne of the Walloon Ardennes, Liège-Bastogne-Liège. "They waited until I retired to finish it on a hill," he once said. He was second twice, third once and fourth twice, and each time the

race finished after descending into the city, not climbing out of Liège as the race does now.

Uphill battler

Criquielion's greatest weapon was a devastating change of pace uphill, which he used to drop his fellow breakaways to win the 1984 World Championships road race alone on a gruelling circuit in Barcelona. Always immaculate, always a stylist, the Belgian carried the rainbow jersey with distinction, wearing it to the first of his two victories in Flèche Wallonne the following spring.

Claude Criquielion will also be remembered for the 1988 World Championships in Renaix, when Canada's Steve Bauer knocked him off his bike in the sprint. Criquielion could have won that race, and Renaix is just over 10 miles from where he was born. The disappointment was tangible; the acrimony between Criquielion and Bauer went on for years. It's forgotten now, but Claude Criquielion never will be. The way he raced will ensure that.



Criquielion:
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No gold for GB track team in Paris

Team GB leave Worlds without a win, for the first time in 14 years

British Cycling CEO Ian Drake defended his technical director Shane Sutton and the British track team after they left the 2015 Track World Championships in Paris without a single gold medal — the team's worst haul since 2001.

"Shane Sutton has been part of our success, but we have to build around him to create a robust system," Drake said. "We've made changes bringing in the likes of Heiko [Salzwedel] and Justin [Grace], the best people still want to come and work here."

Those changes will take time to have an effect and Drake admitted it will be a case of "getting through Rio", as they build back up towards the 2020 and 2024 Olympic Games.

Throughout last week pressure mounted on Laura Trott in the omnium, as other gold medal chances slipped away. The double Olympic champion and de facto GB team leader went into the event's final points race in second place, chasing Annette Edmondson of Australia. But the Australian endurance women were unstoppable in Paris and Edmondson actually extended her lead to take her second gold medal. Trott held on for silver; one of three that GB won.

We need a hero

Edmondson was part of the team pursuit squad that beat Great Britain earlier in the week, putting to an end GB's four-year unbeaten run, and taking three seconds off the world record.

This is the first time Trott has failed to win a world title since she has been competing in senior competition. "The team does need an iconic leader, there's no two ways about that," said Sutton.

"She's so young and bubbly it's like water off a duck's back. She just gets up there, keeps smiling, and keeps competitive."

A clearly disappointed Trott, however, said she didn't see herself as a leader, and a lot will now be expected of Sir Bradley Wiggins when he rejoins the national team later this year. BC's new men's endurance coach Heiko Salzwedel confirmed Wiggins is not guaranteed a place in the team pursuit squad that bounced back to take an excellent silver medal in Paris, but his presence is certain to bring an added dimension.

The GB sprinters' performance in Paris was the most concerning, as both male and female riders failed to get anywhere near the podium. A lot is being pinned on new coach Justin Grace, who joined the team late last year, although Sutton said that some gaps between GB and other nations were too big to be bridged.

■ Full report starts page 62.

MY VIEW...

Simon Richardson

Cycling Weekly
deputy editor



Forget the PR talk of 'moving forward in performances' — last week's Track Worlds will set alarm bells ringing around Manchester velodrome. With £30m in funding for the Rio Olympic cycle — making cycling Britain's second best funded sport — three silver medals is nowhere near good enough. This is the biggest test of Shane Sutton and his team and if they can't turn it round, and quickly, British Cycling faces having its funding slashed in 2017.





Not even Laura Trott
could win a gold
medal this year



Kristiansen cooked
up a solution for Sky
when barred from
the hotel kitchen

Sky chef's canny cooking in Spain

Team Sky's Danish chef Søren Kristiansen had to improvise with portable induction hobs at last week's Tour of Andalusia after the manager of the team's hotel refused him access to the kitchen.

"If the manager of this hotel let me cook in his kitchen he could get fired, and maybe sometimes that's a little too much to ask," said Kristiansen. "We can always figure out how to do it. Sometimes you have to think outside of the box."

Welcome return for Yorks festival

The Malton Festival of Cycling will return in 2015 after a successful first year that saw it labelled as one of the best new cycling events in over 40 years by British Cycling president Bob Howden. Featuring a full programme of amateur racing and events around the Yorkshire town, the festival will take place on Sunday June 21.

Ritte-Easton team unveiled

A new team backed by cycling equipment distributor Silverfish will hit the British racing circuit this season. Called Ritte-Easton after the two brands that will provide frames and components, the squad of eight riders includes John Spanopoulos, a 21-year-old member of the Greek track squad who lives in Athens.

- Ritte-Easton team 2015: Ben Carty, George Fowler, Bevan Humphreys, Anthony Moye, Al Murison, Sam Redding, John Spanopoulos, Charlie Tanfield.

More woe for Contador

Chris Froome wasn't the only Brit snatching victory from under Alberto Contador's nose last week: first year junior Charlie Quarterman (Zappi's CC) soloed to victory in the Circuit del Guadiana, the opening round of the Spanish junior national road race series, ahead of riders from the Contador-sponsored junior team, Flex-Fund Alberto Contador.

To do this week...

Go

Revolution Series, Lee Valley Velo Park, February 27-28

Laura Trott and Ed Clancy, fresh from the Track World Championships in Paris, along with Team Sky's Peter Kennaugh, are some of the names scheduled to appear at Round Five of the Revolution Series. Nestled in the middle of the action is Dame Sarah Storey's women's Hour attempt, on the Saturday afternoon. Tickets available at www.cyclingrevolution.com

Ride

Velo Club Long Eaton reliability ride, March 1

Heavy snow and ice meant the Long Eaton reliability ride, originally scheduled for February 1, had to be postponed for a month. The routes take riders from Nottingham into the hills of Derbyshire. Entry is £5 with routes of 39 or 70 miles starting at 9.30am from Sawley Marina. www.vclong Eaton.com

Read

The Monuments by Peter Cossins, released February 26

As Het Nieuwsblad gets Classics season under way this weekend, take the opportunity to indulge in the most revered one-day races in cycling. Now released in paperback and updated to include the 2014 season, the book covers the history of Paris-Roubaix, Milan-San-Remo, Tour of Flanders, Liège-Bastogne-Liège and Il Lombardia. Rider stories are nicely intertwined with race detail and juicy stats, all for under a tenner. www.bloomsbury.com/uk

Watch

Het Nieuwsblad and Kuurne-Brussels-Kuurne, February 28 and March 1

Hop over the channel and travel into Belgium for a weekend double header of racing, as the cobbled Classics season kicks off. Omloop Het Nieuwsblad (which Team Sky's Ian Stannard won last year) takes place on Saturday, followed by Kuurne-Brussels-Kuurne on Sunday. If you can't make it to Belgium, Kuurne is live on **Eurosport 2**.



Essential early spring viewing

Photo: Graham Watson

Guest column

Graeme Obree



“We had a choice: either submit to an undetectable drug that is ‘endemic’ or leave the party”

Lance Armstrong recently stated that he would dope again given the same circumstances as 1995. He used the word ‘endemic’ to describe artificial performance enhancement in the 1990s peloton. He inferred he won fairly. He seemed to be seeking validation from us that he did good. In the end we learned nothing new.

The most interesting thing about the BBC interview last month was the response to it. It reminded me of my days of being an outcast as an incomer policeman's son where everyone must be seen to give me a hard time for peer group approval.

Actually, I have a lot in common with Mr Armstrong.

Here we see a human obsessed with a sport that whisked us from amateurism right into the elite caravan on the world stage.

For both of us, events in Norway in 1993 defined our career.

Here also is someone who chased repeating his achievements, never being satisfied with enough.

I can only speak for myself when I say that my self-worth depended on it and that obsessive behaviour only delayed the inevitable self-analysis.

Eventually we both faced the stark choice for top professionals in the Nineties and early Noughties: either submit to an undetectable drug that is ‘endemic’ or leave the party.

I said no. My career effectively ended in 1995 after winning my second world title, while Lance's continued.

Both choices had consequences for personal honour, financial security and public integrity. It seems possible now for top riders to have all three, but not then. Now Lance has only the cash but the commonality is anger and resentment.

I had to deal with my anger of the ‘yes’ men's wealth and the continuing acclaim of the unimpeached. Does Lance resent the many still unexposed? Probably, but we all need to find the humility to move on.

Let's not forget the greater good of the sport. It looked in bad shape not so long ago but it's not like that today.

If I can forgive what the doping industry cost me, then surely anybody can — including Lance.

I personally won't be rushing to condemn a man without thinking first — a man with no route to validation for the first time in his adult life.

Bike-building, trail-blazing Scot Graeme Obree has always gone against the grain. He walked away from a pro road contract in the mid 1990s.



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Brits Abroad

Jessie Walker, 20

Matrix Pro Cycling,
Oudenaarde, Belgium

Where are you? We're based in Tour of Flanders territory, perfect for riders who like cobbles and not [big] hills. Personally I prefer hill training, but Belgium's great as there are so many races.

How's the form? I'm a professional this year and we're racing in pro races so I upped training over the off-season and spent more time on my diet and recovery. We're the little fish in the pond and it's exciting to see how I'm going to constantly fare against a higher level of riders.

How's life? I find it easier to focus on my stretches, core and diet in Belgium because it's so relaxed and there are less distractions than there are in the UK.

Anything you miss? Home comforts like going to the cinema. I'm surrounded by cycling people and cycling chat abroad, so it's nice to come home and see school friends to switch off from cycling.

What have you learnt? I've picked up tips from other cyclists, such as how to do downtime and what I should and shouldn't be doing. I was with a Dutch cyclist last year whose DS made healthy pancakes after races and that's taught me about the variety of post-race foods.

What's next? Racing for the first part of the season is in France and Belgium. I hope to be at the Women's Tour and would like to podium at the U23 Nationals in Lincoln. My father [Chris] won the Lincoln GP [in 1994] and that's what got me into cycling.



Oman's no omen

Nibali unfazed by poor showing in Middle East

In a reprisal of 2014, defending Tour de France champion Vincenzo Nibali continued his low-key start to the season in last week's Tour of Oman.

The Sicilian placed 20th in the six-day race, nearly three-and-a-half minutes behind the winner Rafael Valls (Lampre-Merida), having previously finished in 39th place in the Dubai Tour at the start of the month.

"I'm not in condition, clearly, but this is February and the Tour is in July," he told *Cycling Weekly*. "It means nothing."

Nibali attacked at the base of Green Mountain, Oman's signature climb on which Friday's fourth stage finished.

However, he faded and lost 2-37 minutes to stage winner Valls, while his

potential Tour rival Tejay van Garderen (BMC) placed second on the stage, just five seconds behind.

Afterwards, the Astana rider explained that he knew he was not in contention to fight for the stage win, and that he worked for team-mate Jakob Fuglsang.

"My form's not how it was when I won the stage here in 2012, but I'm better than I was last year," he added.

"It's the second race that I've done, there are guys [Chris Froome, Tinkoff-Saxo's Rafal Majka] who have already trained at altitude to be ready for the start of their seasons.

"You can either aim for these races, or remain calm and work.

"I'll continue to work, like I've always done," he said. "I'm not that much off."

Yates back in the big time

Sean Yates took control of Tinkoff-Saxo for the first time at last week's Tour of Oman, his highest-profile role since leaving Team Sky at the end of 2012.

"Everyone's a bit nervous because I've been away for a while and I'm starting fresh," he said.

"I feel I've slipped into the position well — apart from yesterday, that is, when I overslept, and Huff [another Tinkoff DS, Tristan Hoffman] thought I'd died and had to break into my room!"

Yates also confirmed to *CW* that he will likely work at the Tour.

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Craig Armitage remembered

Hundreds turn out to pay their respects

Simon Schofield

Hundreds of Yorkshire cyclists gathered to pay tribute to Craig Armitage on Sunday, the well-respected rider who died while taking part in a reliability ride one week earlier.

The 44-year-old died close to Bolton Abbey in the Yorkshire Dales during the Otley CC event after he was in collision with an oncoming

car (CW February 19).

The death shocked the local cycling community and organisers of the Alba Rosa reliability ride, part of the same series as the Otley CC event, decided it needed to be marked.

"The same bunch turn up for the series of all seven reliability rides and Craig was well known to many of them," said Jonny Southwell, chair of Alba Rosa CC. "We felt we had to carry on with

ours — it would have been Craig's wish.

"The cycling community has been hit very hard by this," he added. "There's been a real outpouring of grief and there's no better way of marking that than holding part of our ride in his memory."

An estimated 300 riders assembled at the Lawnswood Arms in North Leeds. Some wore the jersey of Seacroft Wheelers, Armitage's first club, which he joined at 12

years of age. All took part in a minute's silence in honour of Armitage, followed by a minute's applause.

A sombre peloton then set off in groups of 30 riders for a 14-mile ride, which was routed past Armitage's home in Otley, before the main ride which is run in memory of Alex Warburton. The tribute was approved by Armitage's widow, Jill. The first group included Armitage's father, Ken, riding one of his son's old bikes, his closest friends and riding mates as well as

Photo: Russell Ellis



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colleagues from his In Gear Coaching team.

Armitage was a seasoned racer on the Yorkshire circuit, most recently riding at second-category level. His former teams included Triangle, Chevin, and CrossTrax. Recently, Armitage formed a small team, In Gear Coaching, which concentrated on training youngsters.

"He was absolutely passionate about that," said Tristan Emptage, a close friend.

Armitage leaves a widow,

Jill and three young children. A tribute fund, Goodbye Craig, has become the focus for the support of his family.

As we went to press, it had raised almost £13,000. Goodbye Craig can be found on the [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com) site.

MY VIEW...

Simon Schofield

Cycling Weekly contributor



Around 100 friends and family of Craig Armitage gathered outside his home and applauded as an estimated 300 cyclists rode past at respectful pace. It's at moments like this that the cycling community is at its best. It was a deeply moving tribute to a well-liked member of our tribe and perhaps more importantly, it brought some comfort to his devastated family.

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THE BIG QUESTION

We asked you... How would you improve the coverage of cycle racing on TV?

Have a one-hour weekly highlights programme including all the current races. It's difficult to follow all the races that are on, and sometimes I pre-record them, sit down when I've got the TV to myself only to find that Eurosport decided to show the Azerbaijan open snooker championship instead. Frustrating.

Andy Rigate

Use quadcopters (drones) instead of or as well as helicopters, they can get closer to the riders. Get rid of the helicopter noise as it's annoying. Split screen action during long steady sections, maybe with re-runs or interviews alongside the live action.

Iain Brownbridge

Publicise it better. Trying to find which channel is covering which race can be a pain. It doesn't help if programmes are

bumped at the last minute, as per the final stage of the Dubai Tour.

Jeff Parry

For the Tour Down Under last month they had Robbie McEwen giving updates from the back of a motorbike on the road. It added an extra insight and dimension, especially as Robbie is such an articulate speaker.

David Jones

Remember the big fuss about new digital tech for Formula One? We should have the option to pick between cameras and ride with our favourite. On-screen speed, with wind information, upcoming intermediate sprints etc.

Mark Middleton

Standard graphics set by the UCI. More live on-bike cameras. Eurosport to stop bumping highlights. Better highlights rather than the last hour, similar to ITV4's Tour de France coverage. More women's races and more British races.

David Palmer

More on-board bike cameras. More detailed look at the bikes with a mechanic talking. Riders' tips for race sections. Better shots from the motorbike.

Nik Kearley

Put it all on one channel. Sky pay a fortune to sponsor a team but its coverage is infrequent. Get Phil Liggett and Chris Boardman working for them and get UCI to sort the graphics.

Tom Mason



Photo: Graham Watson

NEXT WEEK'S BIG QUESTION...

What improvements would you make to Britain's roads to make them safer for cyclists?

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Letters

Letter of the week
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Timeless anticipation

STAR
LETTER

Love the new layout of CW! As child I was too poor to buy a regular *Beano* or *Hotspur*, so I now look forward, with the same anticipation, to 6am on Thursday morning when I go to the newsagent and get my copy of *Cycling Weekly*. I read it avidly while drinking fresh coffee.

Because I'm past the age of being a MAMIL (middle-aged man in Lycra), my brother came up with a term that describes me and most of my cycling companions: we're PILOCs — pensioners in Lycra on cycles... and proud of it!

Ray Duffy, email

Bridging the gap

There's a big gap for beginner riders between riding by oneself and stepping up to go out for a 50-plus mile club run at speed on a Sunday morning. Some kind of bridge ride would be welcome to help with the transition. Perhaps a regular 30-mile run at slower speed?

Iain Leheny, email

Remembering Albert

I've just read with sadness about the passing of Albert Roberts (CW Jan 22). He was best known for his road and time trial performances but was also quite an accomplished track rider. Albert and I paired up for many Madisons in the early Sixties, winning a few and rarely

finishing out of the top three. One of our claims to fame was winning an eight-lap Madison pursuit at Herne Hill, relegating Mike Gambrell/Alan Killick, Robin Buchan/Alan Sturgess and Denis Tarr/Alan Jackson, all stars in their own right, to the minor places.

Ted McDonald, South Africa

Got it taped

Last year my wife and I went to north Wales for a weekend. I had my bike mounted on a tow bar, covered with polythene sheet, taped tightly to keep it dry. On arrival, I removed the cover to use my bike.

When we left the area, I once again covered my bike with polythene and used the last of the duct tape to secure it.

However, I hadn't secured it as I should have. A look through the rear-view mirror, while driving along the motorway, revealed my bike was leaning backwards and the polythene sheet had torn.

I stopped to assess the problem, secured the bike and wanted to repair the sheet — but had no tape. Until I found, there at the side of the car exactly where we'd stopped, a roll of duct tape! I secured the sheet and left the tape where I'd found it.

I wonder if anyone else has stopped at the same point and found that miracles do happen.

Ted Laidler, email

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26,273 

Cycling Weekly ABC. Jan-Dec, 2014 (print & digital)

Subscriptions hotline (0844) 848 0848

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES (for 51 issues, including postage)

£156.25 inside the UK; £294.90 Europe; USA \$384.20; Rest of

World £251.79 Send orders and correspondence to:

Oakfield House, 35 Perryman Road, Haywards Heath,

West Sussex RH16 3DH.

Cheques payable to Time Inc (UK) Ltd.

BACK ISSUES: John Denton Services,

PO Box 772, Peterborough, PE2 6JW

Tel: 01733 370 800, www.mags-uk.com/ipc

Cycling Weekly, 0011-4316, is published Weekly by Time Inc (UK) Ltd.

Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0SU, England

The 2015 US annual subscription price is \$384.20. Airfreight and mailing in

the USA by agent named Air Business Ltd, c/o Worldnet Shipping Inc., 156-15,

146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA.

Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica NY 11431.

US Postmaster: Send address changes to Cycling Weekly, Air Business Ltd, c/o

Worldnet Shipping Inc., 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA

Subscription records are maintained at Time Inc, Blue Fin Building, 110

Southwark Street, London, SE1 0SU, England

Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.

Cycling Weekly is published every Thursday by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, Leon House,

233 High Street, Croydon CR9 1HZ.

Registered at the Post Office as a newspaper. Colour origination: CTT Limited,

Units C/D, Sutherland House, Sutherland Road, London E17

6BU. Printing: Southernprint (Web Offset) Ltd, 17-21 Factory Road, Upton

Industrial Estate, Poole, Dorset BH16 5SN

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Johnny Helms was *Cycling Weekly*'s resident cartoonist. His work served to document club life through some six decades. That's approaching 3,500 cartoons from February 1946

until November 2009, making Helms the longest continually published contributor not only of this magazine but any publication in the UK and probably the world.

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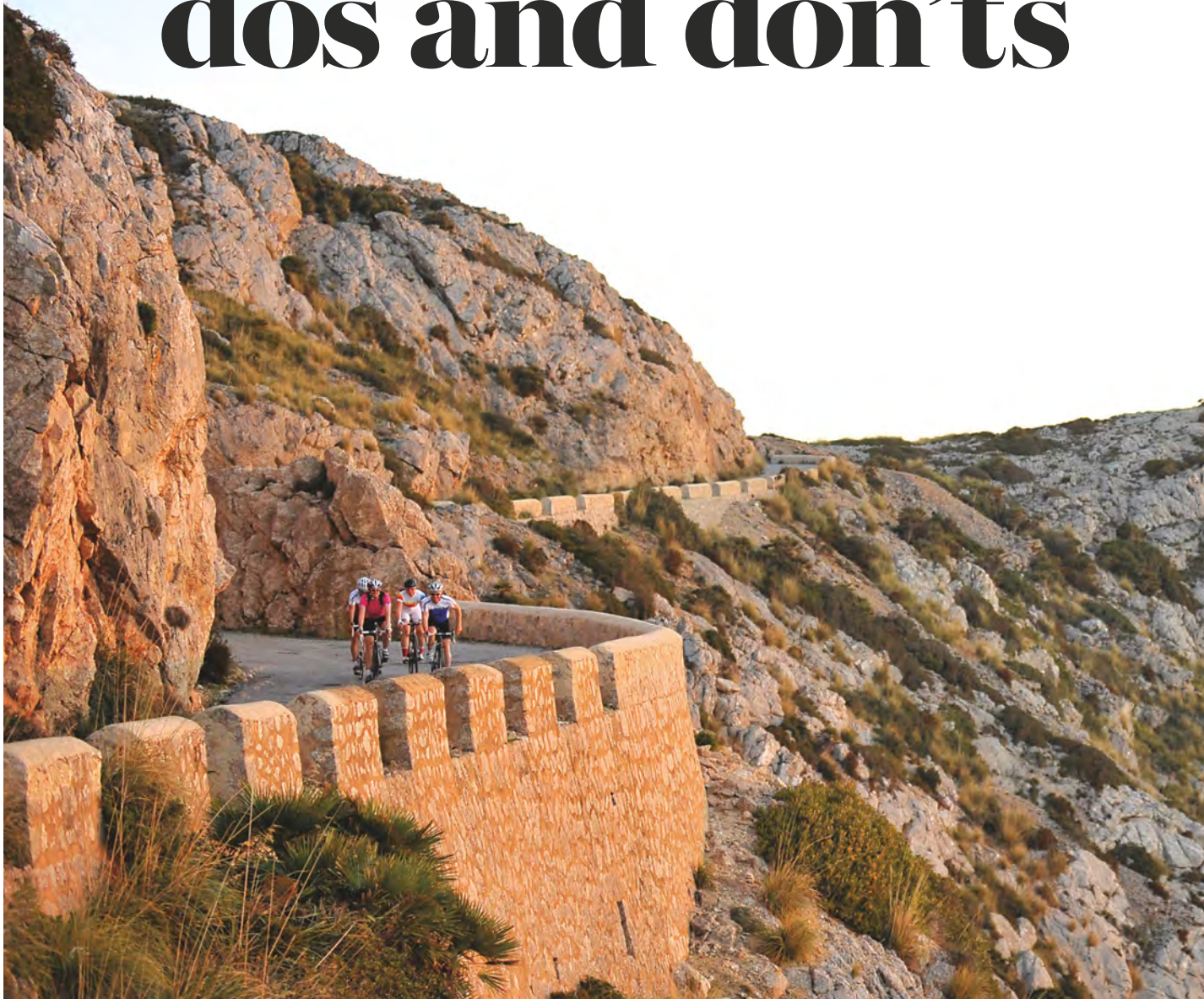


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Training camp dos and don'ts



Escaping the wet and cold for a warm-weather training camp is almost irresistible at this time of year. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Strava are full of pics of pro riders and possibly your own clubmates getting the miles in while you are shivering at home. But take comfort, it's not too late to book something for this year.

The options for training camps, like cycling itself, are ever-expanding. It's

important to establish what you are looking for in a training camp and what you hope to get out of the camp, whether it is a week of sunny riding and socialising or focused coaching towards a specific race or event.

Camps can either radically improve your fitness or leave you exhausted and broken. Here is *Cycling Weekly's* dos and don'ts for getting the most from your training camp.

Training camp dos

1 Have a rest day. When you only have a limited time to train but the sun is shining and the mountains beckon, it's tempting to smash out the miles every day that you can, but a midweek rest day will allow you to continue to train hard in the latter part of the camp rather than accumulating increasing amounts of fatigue.

A week away can be beneficial for the legs, head, heart and tan. But there are pitfalls. Here are *Cycling Weekly's* top tips on where to go and how to get the most out of your trip

Words: John Walsh Photos: Roo Fowler; Jesse Wild



Take the long view:
spread your riding

2 Plan your flights well, particularly if travelling in a large group. A club of 24 recently flew out to Majorca from Liverpool. As their plane taxied off, 12 bike boxes remained firmly rooted to the tarmac. If there are a lot of you think about booking two separate flights, as certain airlines will be only too happy to take your booking even though it may lead to your bike having an overnight at the airport before joining you.

3 Tool up appropriately. If you're travelling with an organised training camp you are unlikely to need to take more tools or spares than you would on a normal day ride back home. However, if travelling as a group of friends it's likely two things will happen — you will have 10 different track pumps or everyone will look around at each other's deflated tyres before someone saying "I thought you were bringing the track pump..."

4 Take spares specific to your bike. As bikes get higher end and more specialised the components get more individualistic and hard to get hold of. A humble spoke or two breaking could be crucial to your camp, with replacements hard to source even somewhere with a multitude of shops like Majorca. You don't want to end up on a hire bike while your pride and joy awaits repairs.

5 Have a recovery week when you get home. An easy week will give your body time to recover from the hard training you have done, so you are fresh and ready to use the fitness from your camp as the springboard for the next phase of your training.

6 Remember to take the time to sample some of the local culture or take in the scenery. While it is almost all about the bike, it will be more satisfying if you experience your surroundings.

7 Choose a coached camp if you want to seriously improve your riding, says Dave LeGrys of Legro's Sportive Camps, www.legrossportivetrainingcamp.com. "Getting in the miles is often a key goal, but on a coached camp you can learn more about nutrition and training and improve your skills, making you a faster rider. The learning benefits from this will last longer than your tan."

8 Pack your favourite energy drink/gels/bars and take them to camp with you, says performance researcher Andrew Hamilton, BSc Hons MRSC ACSM. "Having access to a tried and tested top-up source of energy is a great asset, especially when you're far away from home and churning out the miles."

9 Spread your riding out sensibly across the camp, says Oli Roberts, coach at pbscience.com. "Set a plan for the total time riding, how hard you want to ride and roughly how long you want to spend riding per day before you go. Remember that while the camp will give you the chance to ride more and rest more to cope with the load, you're still working with the fitness you have rather than what you wish you had. I like to plan on a three-day rotation: medium length ride with quality work, longer steadier endurance ride, then easy day or day off." ▶



Training camp don'ts

1 Put your shoes in with your bike. If your bike goes missing you lose your shoes too. It's a good idea to pack shoes, pedals and helmet in your hand luggage so if your bike is delayed you can still hire one and not miss a valuable day's training.

2 Believe the forecast. Many a training camp boasts 364 days of sunshine a year, but if you happen to be unlucky and be there on the 365th day when all the yearly rain falls, your lovely white cycling top will not shelter you from the elements. Don't forget the sun cream but always remember at least one set of kit suitable for a UK winter's day.

3 Act like you're in a road race on the first ride. On every training camp someone will try to be the hero on the first day. Of course you will be excited but ensure your first day's ride is just a leg stretch. Work up to a longer or more challenging ride in the middle of the week before backing off to shorter distances.

4 Make weight loss your target for the week. It's more important to fuel your riding correctly so that you can train hard and effectively. You will be training significantly more than at home and under-fuelling will leave you fatigued and more at risk of illness.

5 Fall into bed without devoting 15-minutes to stretching, says Lexie Williamson, author of *Yoga for Cyclists*. "Stretch out the glutes, hip flexors, hamstrings and quads. A little stretching will aid recovery, freshen up the legs for another day's training and improve comfort levels, especially around the lower back."

6 Go mad at the buffet. OK, it isn't about weight loss but neither is it an excuse to eat everything in sight. Buffets are the worst as you can keep going back for more. Don't, and choose wisely.

7 Overdo it on the coffee stops, says Emma Barraclough, senior sports nutritionist for Science in Sport. "European coffee can be much stronger than that in the UK. High caffeine intake can irritate your gut if you're enjoying multiple coffee stops on consecutive days. Try decaf or teas instead and keep the stress on your gut lower."

8 Fall into the mega-ride suffer-fest trap, cautions coach Oli Roberts from pbscience.com. "I usually set a maximum ride duration of 5hrs in a long camp and a minimum intensity around 30W below lactate threshold (except on easy days). There can be a place for much longer and easier riding but in most cases backing up sensible endurance training around LT is a much better use of time."



Louis Meintjes
— MTN-Qhubeka

On my first ever MTN training camp, I ordered a Coca-Cola to drink at dinner — right in front of the directors. It's not a good drink for a cyclist, and they told me that. Never again.



Martin Elminger
— IAM Cycling

It's easy to push too hard at training camps — especially when you're a young rider and want to impress. The season is very long now, so you don't want to burn yourself out too soon. When I see riders without motivation in August, I think that's because they started the year in too good condition.



Wout Poels
— Team Sky

Don't neglect eating and drinking — especially if it's hot. You use a lot more energy in the sun and you don't want to get cramps and feel sick.



Zak Dempster
— Bora-Argon 18

I think nearly every pro has turned up at a training camp and pushed too hard. I wouldn't say that's easy to do, but sometimes if your form is OK, you can get carried away. ▶

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Where to go for pre-season training

Tenerife

Tenerife has boomed in popularity since it was revealed Wiggo and Team Sky came here to kick start their gloriously successful 2012. It certainly has a lot to offer the dedicated rider. Mount Teide dominates the entire island; the cone of the now extinct volcano tops out at 3,718m but as a cyclist you summit at nearly 2,200m. The advantage being that you can ride from sea level, so you can ascend the full 2,200m in one continuous climb. Team Sky spent much of its camps knocking out intervals between 1,500m and 2,000m and the secret is now out with many pro teams spending time there. Last year Contador's Tinkoff-Saxo team was caught on the unopened new motorway doing a chain-gang session.

It is an all-winter-round destination with the climate comfortably warm enough to ride in shorts even in December and January. Tenerife is a great destination for the already fit rider who wants to focus on specific training and really stretch their climbing ability, but may not suit those looking for a more varied or relaxed cycling holiday.

Must do climb: All roads lead to Mt Teide. For an extra few miles and a little bit more climbing, head past the Parador Hotel where Wiggo stayed for altitude training.

Airport: Tenerife South

Tuscany

Many training destinations provide plenty of tarmac but lack soul. The area round Lucca in Tuscany has both; it is steeped in cycling culture and history, as well as being covered in excellent roads that are ideal for training. Even the pros have time to stop for a cappuccino between sessions, and the dolce vita attracts riders from across Europe.

Mario Cipollini, with 42 stage wins in the Giro d'Italia, can often be seen heading off on his morning ride. The rain-soaked 2013 World Championships

started from here before heading east through the Tuscany hills to Florence. Tinkoff-Saxo have now set up base in Tuscany, with the exception of Alberto Contador. Many pros call Lucca home, including up and coming Spaniard Carlos Verona, and although the climbs are quite modest compared with those in Tenerife there are numerous 5-6km ascents heading up to tucked away Tuscan villages.

Must-do climb: When a new rider arrives in Lucca they are sent up Monte Serra for judgment. At 890m it is quite modest but steep ramps and an average gradient of 9 per cent, with sections of 18 per cent, mean all three approximately 10km ascents present a challenge. A great testing ground.

Airport: Pisa

Andalusia

Head to Ronda from where you can tackle a week's worth of great training rides with plenty of passes in the 1,000-1,500m range. Andalusia, in southern Spain, is sunnier and warmer earlier in the year than the more popular Majorca. There is a great variety of riding, including a big day out to the coast at Estepona that involves an ascent of the Puerto de Peñas Blancas, past the Vuelta statue. The road was used as a stage finish in the 2013 edition, so the tarmac is pristine.

Traditional white villages perched on the hillsides are linked by varied riding terrain, including short punchy climbs. A small but growing number of companies offer training camps and more intrepid riders head here. Ronda has an excellent bike shop to boot.

Must-do climb: The Puerto de las Palomas has featured in the Tour of Andalusia and is a favourite climb for those in the know. Head to Zahara de la Sierra to tackle the 14km climb to 1,183m, which has a good variety of gradients, including a few short sections at 12 per cent

Airport: Malaga

Nice-Alpes Maritimes

For training head to the hills behind Nice, where there are myriad options from popular climbs that feature regularly in the Paris-Nice race such as the Col de Vence, to spectacular, little-known routes such as the Clue de Gréolières above the Gorge du Loup. Base yourself in Nice and finish your rides by cruising along the Promenade des Anglais or stay up in the hills for quick access to the climbs.

Nice is a good road riding destination all year round but temperatures are cool during the winter and may limit you to some of the lower climbs such as the Cold d'Eze. By April it is warm, making it perfect to polish your riding for the season ahead.

Must-do climb: Lance can keep his Col de la Madone, head further inland for purer classic climbs such as the Col de Braus, near the small town of Sospel, with its dramatic hairpins.

Airport: Nice

Majorca

Majorca is the obvious easy choice. There is great infrastructure for cyclists and loads of good bike shops. And being surrounded by so many other bike riders is, for many, part of the appeal. There is a variety of terrain, including flat coastal rides and mountain passes.

It's one of the original training camp destinations and pro teams have been heading there since the 1980s. Its popularity with the pros shows no signs of slowing with Sky kicking off their early season preparation there last month. In many ways it has become a victim of its own success with huge trains of riders filling the road and mobbing the cafes.

For British riders it's virtually a home from home as they return year after year. Hanging out at Tolos's bar is also a large part of the scene as anyone who's anyone heads here including cycling celebs. It's a good place to meet friendly faces from events back home.

Must do climb: Sa Calobra — not the highest climb on the island (that title goes to the Puig Major at 854m) but certainly the most exciting to ride as it twists and turns spectacularly while rising out of the Mediterranean

Airport: Palma de Mallorca



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Bike weight limits: where to draw the line?

The UCI has a minimum weight limit for bikes used in its sanctioned events, but advances in technology mean it's under review

How much does technology move on in 15 years? Back in 2000, the internet was just starting to flourish; there was no iPhone; electric vehicles were only golf buggies or milk floats; and the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) set its minimum bike weight limit at 6.8kg or 15.9lb. Of course, most of those things have changed with the times — except the UCI's bike weight limit.

And so, while manufacturers have made increasingly lighter bikes that are perfectly stiff and safe, to get around the rules pro team mechanics are in the bizarre position of having to add extra ballast to bring them up to the set minimum. For legendary bike designer Mike Burrows — the man who invented Chris Boardman's Lotus bike — it's a ludicrous situation.

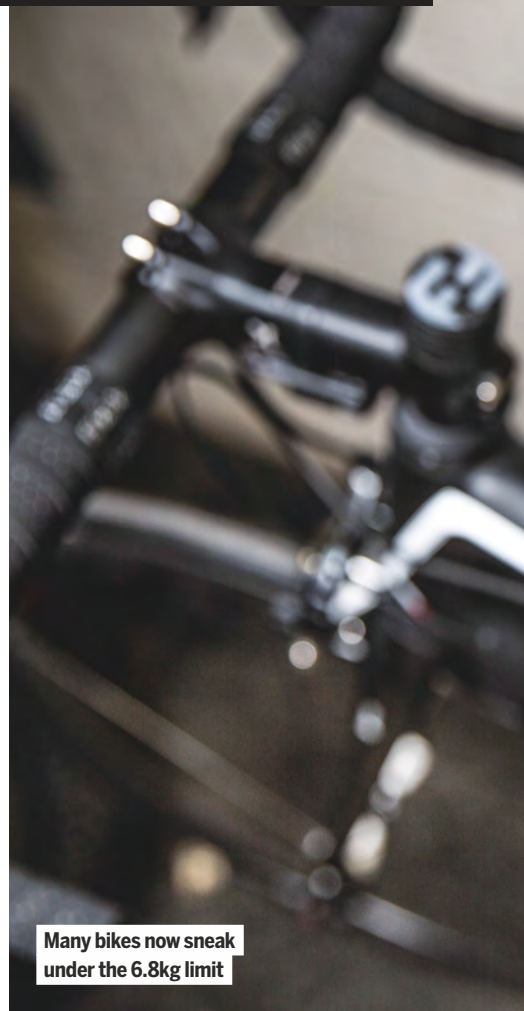
"When I was chief designer at Giant the ONCE riders were crying out: build us a lighter bike. We said we can build

you a bike, but it'll only last six minutes. They said fine, we'll have it anyway — that was their attitude," Burrows said.

"But the manufacturers don't want their bikes falling apart and they aren't going to make dangerous bicycles. If one of your riders has their bicycle fail on them at the Tour de France, the images are up on YouTube before the rider is on a replacement bike. No brand wants that."

Outmoded regulation

Even the UCI has started to see the error of this particular rule. Speaking last year, the UCI's new technical consultant Dimitris Katsanis said: "At that time [that rule was set] there was no standard of safety for bicycles. The regulator did a pretty good job to try and predict what it could be in a few years' time. So the 6.8kg rule at that time was very much a safety net; you didn't go below that because you're going to make a bike that's very fragile. Yes, today, this is a bit



Many bikes now sneak under the 6.8kg limit

outdated and we are looking at how we can do it better."

However, British Cycling's head of technical development Tony Purnell — whose background is in the high-tech world of Formula One — feels things shouldn't go too far.

"My feeling is that all super-low weight

Yes

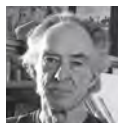


Tony Purnell

British Cycling head of technical development

"The UCI does weigh bikes from time to time before events, so it is very important for any team or federation to make sure that they are over the weight limit. I was at the Giro d'Aosta — a big under-23 race — and I was quite shocked by the number of bikes failing the UCI test. With today's bikes it's quite easy to get a few grams under the limit."

No



Mike Burrows

Former chief designer at Giant

"It's obviously possible to build a bicycle that is so light it isn't safe — it's always been possible to do that. But does it happen? Did it ever happen in the past? I don't think so. Manufacturers aren't stupid. If people start making 6lb bicycles and they fall apart in the middle of a sprint, those people will learn their lesson quicker than you could write the legislation."



will lead to is the need to very carefully 'life' all your components. By that I mean record the number of hours that they're being used for and factor in the stresses they face," Purnell said.

"In motor racing we did that routinely, but I think that's a frightening prospect for cycling because there's not — and I don't think there should be — the culture of making bits for five or six hours of life to get them extremely mega-light.

"Of course it's a nice thing to write about and drop your jaw at when you read about 4kg bikes, but I think it's basically bad for the sport if the top-end bikes get too esoteric, too expensive and too out of the reach of good club racers. And it's dangerous.

"With super-light carbon bits, the wall thickness is so thin you can squeeze

them, yet they are really strong. But you cannot dent them or ding them because they're useless after that. But that's where super-light weight will take us."

OUR TAKE

With bicycle construction and especially the use of composite material moving on so quickly, the existing UCI bike weight limits do seem to have become archaic. Nobody wants a bike that is pushing technology so far that it could fail. However, there's a compelling argument that standardised safety testing rather than arbitrary weight limits would be more effective.

HOT STUFF

SeaSucker Talon QR 1-bike fork-mount rack and rear wheel strap

We can't say we're looking forward to testing the new SeaSucker bike rack although using sucker pads instead of conventional rails and bolts certainly brings a whole new way to carry your bike on the car. SeaSucker says that it sticks exceptionally well to glass and metal surfaces — let's hope so!

Contact: www.fisheroutdoor.co.uk

Price: £249.99

Test report:

March 26



Garmin Vector pedal-based power meter

Power *is* the performance measure and as prices start to fall power meters will become more accessible. The Vector is the only production pedal based system, and boasts quick installation and ease of use — shame it isn't available with other pedal brands...

Contact: www.madison.co.uk

Price £1,199.99 Test report: June 4



Assos ij.bonKa.6 winter jacket

It's going to have to be a quick turn around to truly test the Assos ij.bonKa.6 winter jacket before the temperature starts to creep into double figures. On first look this is a serious winter jacket and Assos claims 32 pattern pieces, six different textiles used and 13 components within the ij.BonKa.6; a lot to get through.

Contact:

www.assos.com

Price: £349.99

Test report:

March 12



Vittoria Open Pave CG III tyres £43.99

Derived from the cobble-bashing tubular, known for its trademark green sidewalls, the Open CG (clincher) is more accessible, and, thanks to the Full Black version, more desirable for the fastidious riders amongst us who demand matching collars and cuffs.

Vittoria says it's high on comfort, puncture and impact resistance. With 95psi in the 25c we were treated to a comfortable ride, and despite our reservation of rolling on the notorious puncture-tastic, high 320tpi thread count, these have remained intact, without a nick or cut throughout 100 winter miles. Although to every yin there's a yang: slower rolling resistance. But it's a small price to pay, and we'll happily take grip over outright tyre speed at this time of year. **240g**

www.chickencycles.co.uk



9



Radial Cycles Porter saddlebag £14.99

Despite only launching in November, Radial already has a 10-model road bike range and a huge array of parts and accessories. This small model of its Porter saddlebag fits snugly underneath the slimmest of saddles, and is just about big enough for an inner tube, multi-tool and tyre levers: the bare necessities for your average ride. A smaller, zipped side pocket also offers a good place to store smaller items such as keys and loose change.

The only problem we had was with the positioning of the zip on the side of the bag, which made it awkward to use and had us emptying everything out in order to find what we were after. **55g**

www.radialcycles.co.uk

7



Mavic Cosmic Carbone 40 C wheels £1,800

These lightweight aero clinchers offer excellent versatility along with superb quality. Wheels are often described as stiff, but these genuinely are — we experienced no lateral movement or brake rub even when going full-gas out of the saddle. The rims are carbon, but feature a very thin layer of alloy inside the braking surface, to enable superior heat dissipation. Mavic has included this feature on safety grounds to eliminate the risk of failure caused by the stress and heat build-up that occurs during prolonged braking.

We found that the combination of Exalith pads and the rims on these wheels offered excellent and confident braking. Stopping in the wet was notably less efficient, but was superior to experiences we have had with other carbon rims. Mavic supplies the wheels with 23mm Yksion tyres, which we are informed are more aero than a 25mm; a shame as we prefer the feel and lower rolling resistance of the latter. **1,545g** (pair without tyres)

www.mavic.com

9



BBB Adapt sunglasses £79.95

If your budget can stretch to £99.95, BBB offers a 'PH' version of these Adapt sunglasses, which come complete with photochromic lenses that adapt (see what they did there?) to changing light conditions.

The standard Adapt pair we had cost slightly less, a reasonable £79.95, but still come with a choice of three interchangeable lenses that should have you covered for all rides. The frame felt generally sturdy, although some flex is needed to change lenses. They fit well both around the sides of the head and over the nose, although this sturdiness occasionally translated into bulkiness, with the thick frame on the outside of the lenses occasionally impeding peripheral vision. **36g**

www.windwave.co.uk

7



K-Edge Garmin mount £29.99

Product of the week

We love a classy CNC-machined accessory, and K-Edge's forward Garmin bar mount ticks that box nicely. Keeping the handlebar clear, as well as making the data on screen easier to see, is great, but something that other lower priced mounts do too. What sets K-Edge apart is the solid and robust nature of the product. The plastic insert that holds the Garmin in place eliminates rattle and can be changed if it wears out. A simple two-bolt clamp grips the handlebar well with the bolt heads hidden underneath to complete the sleek look. At just 33g, it isn't too much of a weight penalty, either. **33g**

www.madison.co.uk

10

Alé Klimatik Unisex long-sleeved jersey £150

In the January 22 edition of *CW* we did a group test to see if any jerseys could best the Castelli Gabba waterproof jersey. And now Alé throws its hat into the ring with the Klimatik jersey; designed to be worn in wet and cold conditions, while maintaining a close aero fit.

Tailoring is excellent, with minimal bunching on the chest and arms. Water resistance is comparable, but breathability is less impressive than the aforementioned Gabba. The three pockets are well sized and feature a flap that covers the top of them. Although this prevents rain entering, it also hampers access, especially when wearing gloves. This is £30 cheaper than the equivalent long sleeved Gabba, which represents an attractive option. As long as you want it in black, as that is currently the only available colour. **382g** (size medium)

www.paligap.cc



8



Essax Singel saddle £51.99

The Singel features a large central channel running along its length, which is intended to relieve pressure in the perineal area. The saddle is reasonably squishy too, offering a generous amount of cushioning.

Essax claims that this saddle is 38 per cent more rigid than other saddles and that you can be 4.7 per cent more efficient using it. While we'd be hard pushed to prove the 'science' behind these claims, we can report that it's comfortable and the relief channel does a good job. At 270g, it is not the lightest, but it's well made and at £51.99 we can't complain. If you are looking for a more comfortable perch that doesn't cost the earth, then the Singel is well worth trying. **270g**

www.nrg4.co.uk

7

LONG TERM TEST

Two months later

Time Xpresso 10 pedals £139.99

We've been equally impressed and frustrated by these pedals. Both float and engagement are excellent and we've come to love the feel of these pedals underfoot. However, the alloy plate and colourful platform tarnished very quickly. And the cleats (£17.99 a pair), were completely worn out after only a couple of months. **7**

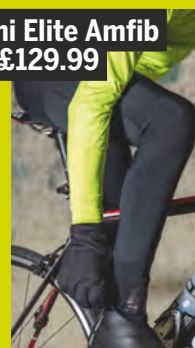


Great pedals but cleats wear quickly

Can't live without

Pearl Izumi Elite Amfib bibtights £129.99

These are designed for the coldest conditions. The fit is a little baggy around the knee, but we consistently find ourselves reaching for these bibs on Baltic days. Comfort, warmth and breathability are all first class. Other features we love are the 'nature flap' and the unique ankle shoe coverings that keep water out and warmth in. After many washes and brutal rides, these well-made tights show minimal signs of wear.



Dolan Ares SL

£2,849.99

Tested by: Simon Smythe Miles ridden: 256
Size tested: 52cm Weight: 7.3kg/16.1lb

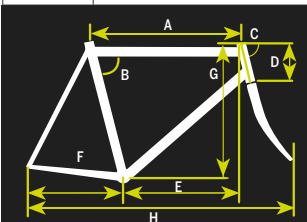
If it ain't broke don't fix it might be a good maxim for Dolan's Ares. The Ares SL is the same bike that the UCI Continental An Post-Sean Kelly team rode in 2011 and 2012 — a bike that proved to be unbreakable even under Niko Eeckhout, the former Belgium champion

Dolan Ares SL

£2,849.99

Value	■■■■■■■■■ 9/10
Frame	■■■■■■■■■ 8/10
Specification	■■■■■■■■■ 7/10
Ride	■■■■■■■■■ 8/10

Distributor	www.dolan-bikes.com
Frame	30-40t and 50t carbon
Fork	One-piece carbon
Size range	44-56cm
Weight	7.3kg/16.1lb
Groupset	Campagnolo Chorus
Alterations	None
Gear ratios	11-27 cassette, 50/34 chainset
Wheels	Campagnolo Bullet CULT Ultra (80mm rear/50mm front)
Tyres	Schwalbe One 23c
Bar	Deda Zero 100
Stem	Deda Zero 100
Seatpost	Dolan Ares 31.6mm
Saddle	Selle Italia Flite



SIZE TESTED: 56

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
56.5cm	73.5"	73°	19cm	40.5cm	40.5cm	56.5cm	100cm



Pro performance without the price tag: Dolan's Ares SL is the club racer's answer

who was nicknamed 'Rambo' — albeit with a few tweaks and a fair bit of weight shaved off.

Value

We were incredibly impressed when we tested the green-liveried An Post bike at the time. It was a genuine pro bike, right up there in performance with the team machines from the big brands — but at a fraction of the price. Three years on, will the updated Ares SL still offer the same unbeatable combination of high speed and low spend?

Frame

The Ares SL is lighter than the original Ares by 110g, and

is now electronic groupset-ready. It also has a BB30 shell and tapered headset. The carbon used is a combination of 30-40 ton and 50 ton. There is higher rated carbon around, but this is as stiff as you will ever want or need. Besides, the Ares SL, despite having lost 110g, is still over the kilo mark (1.2kg claimed) meaning wall thicknesses can be more substantial than those of the current silly-light frames in the pro peloton — resulting in a tough frame.

The one-piece moulded fork is a claimed 50 per cent stiffer and 40g lighter than the previous version.

Dolan has gone for an

oversized 31.6mm seatpost — arguably too stiff for many frames, but that is the right choice for one as compact as this where there could be a foot or more between the top of the saddle and the top tube.

The finish is good, with a now almost retro-looking 3K-carbon weave alongside the lustrous red and white paint.

Specification

This special edition Dolan Ares comes with the new Campagnolo Chorus groupset, but you can build your own bike as you so wish through the Dolan website.

We don't have the space for a full review of the new



Superb performance from Chorus brakes



Revised four-arm crank is stiffer

Chorus groupset here, but suffice to say it is a massive improvement. The new chainset with its four-arm spider is the most noticeable upgrade visually. It's difficult for ordinary mortals to detect increased stiffness in what was already a stiff chainset, but what Campagnolo has done with the shifting is unmissable. There's a new snappiness at the paddle — it even sounds louder — that moves the chain to a larger sprocket with a new speed and accuracy. The Chorus skeleton brakes are feather light and frighteningly powerful paired with the aluminium braking surface

of the Bullet wheels. As for the wheels themselves, perhaps the decals are a little shouty but then the new Bullets are worth shouting about. Interestingly they don't have the fat rim profiles of the latest generation of aero wheels. You'd have to do an independent wind tunnel test to definitively say whether they were slower or faster, but what's for sure is that they screamed around our regular test loops, both in terms of the noise they make and the speed at which they travel.

Riding

It was pure joy to jump on the Ares SL after a winter

of plugging away on a low-end aluminium mudguard bike.

The Ares SL — as a good carbon frame should do — accelerates with ease, feels beautifully light, in touch with the road and has a taut springiness that cushions the contact points from lumps in the road, in a way

metal frames don't. Having said that, the Ares doesn't have the plushness of some of the current pro frames and with this spec on deep-section wheels, it's built more for speed than comfort. It sounds like an oxymoron but hard efforts are more comfortable than sitting up and twiddling.

The geometry is exactly right — the head angle is half a degree slacker than the seat angle to give predictable high-speed handling and stability.

Verdict

In an era when new models tend to rely on headline-grabbing gimmicks — generally related to aerodynamics or weight — the Ares is all straight lines. And in terms of its performance it plays it straight, too. There are no nasty surprises or quirks.

Terry Dolan, who built Chris Boardman's early time trial frames and is now probably best known for his track frames, has a vast amount of experience. Even though the Ares, like virtually all carbon frames, is built in the Far East, with Dolan you sense you're in good hands.

If you don't want a race

bike from one of the big American brands and would rather go for one from an authentic British name with racing pedigree, then Dolan is it, and the Ares is the bike.

And as before, it's very competitively priced.

8

For

- Clean lines
- Racy ride
- Sensible geometry
- Great value for money

Against

- If you want aero, look elsewhere

Dream shoes

Treat yourself and your toes to the best shoes money can buy



What

We've indulged ourselves this week, sorted online product lists by 'highest price first', and tested the best — or at least the most expensive — road shoes that money can buy. As you would expect from their price tags, these shoes are designed from the highest quality materials (nothing but carbon soles here) to offer what we hope will be uncompromising performance and comfort, ideally with good looks attached.

Why?

Of the three contact points you have with your bike, the connection with the pedals is undoubtedly the most important. All that training you do on the bike is to eke out a few extra watts, so it would be a real shame if that increased power went into bending a cheap sole rather than getting you over the line first at the end of a race. However, for this price our selection of dream shoes also need to fit well and be comfortable enough for day-long riding.

How?

With the most expensive shoes on test setting you back the equivalent of two and a half year's worth of *Cycling Weeklys*, we had to make sure our testing was thorough. Although comfort and fit varies from person to person, our six testers subjected the shoes to a range of situations, as well as rigorous riding. We used long rides to test comfort, and short, fast rides to test performance, while we tested their durability with numerous walks in and out of cafes.

Crono Futura £249

Crono has been making shoes in Italy for 40 years for some of the world's leading brands, Sidi included. Coming in two widths, getting a good fit with the Futura is straightforward. This is also helped by having a slightly offset footbed and supportive arch, which makes the shoes a great shape for the majority of the population. As a result my knees tracked on a straighter line than with many shoes I've tried.

The 3mm carbon sole wouldn't budge when I tried to twist it; in fact during use the shoes were so stiff that they gave the impression that there's a lack of footbed padding. However, it's comparative to other shoes at this price point.

Despite the stiff soles, discomfort from road vibration wasn't a big issue. I was aware, though, of pressure around the ball of the foot, but with the extra width, some pain-relieving movement can still occur. The heel cup gave good support and held the foot firmly in place, as did the top of the shoe, aided by a memory foam tongue.

The Futuras provide a very direct interface between you and the bike, giving a positive, solid platform from which to push against. DB

Weight
265
grams

7

www.zettadistribution.com

Size tested EU 44

Colours: black, white, red, fluoro green, black/green, white/red

Mavic CXR Ultimate £300

Mavic's CXR Ultimate road shoe is a unique piece of kit among the competition on test — a road shoe with an integrated aerodynamic flap. The cover combines a tough but smooth bonded upper with a thinner fabric, which should allow some heat to escape. However, this got dirty and the fabric got pulled, all within the first test ride, so keeping the shoes at their best long-term could be a worry.

This leads nicely to an obvious question. If a pair of £300 shoes is being covered to keep them safe and clean, do they need to be aerodynamic in the first place? The CXRs are certainly a fast-looking shoe, but I was not convinced I experienced any real aerodynamic

benefit while using them that couldn't be achieved with a pair of £10 oversocks.

For those unconcerned with trivial matters like cleanliness, the carbon sole provides an exceptionally stiff platform, and with a very supportive heel I felt confident about power transfer. The double Boa system makes a good fit easily attainable, but you'll have to get it right first time, because they're difficult to adjust mid-ride. Despite that, the CXRs are a great race shoe if you can get your head around the aero-flap paradox. CC

Weight
270
grams

7

www.mavic.com

Size tested EU 44

Colours: yellow



Scott Road Premium £249.99

It's amazing how many initialisms and copyrighted names a firm can cram into a relatively simple cycling shoe. Happily, even with the Boa IP1 lacing system, HMX carbon sole, ErgoLogic insole (with Poron damping, no less), 3D nylon airmesh upper and the obligatory TPU heel tread, there was still enough room for my feet. In fact, there was the *perfect* amount of room, with the Swiss firm getting the sizing absolutely spot-on both in terms of length and width.

Adjustability is excellent too, though it's taken me a while to stop over-tightening the Boa dials — the lack of blood flow to my feet in bitterly cold weather providing a harsh, but probably fair, lesson.

Adjusted correctly, comfort is superb. Even hard sprinting won't cause any heel rub through slippage and, thanks to that HMX carbon sole with a stiffness index of 10, there's very little flex to compromise your efforts, but enough to maintain long-ride comfort with no hot-spots. That's a pretty clever trick to pull off.

The upper is super-malleable so it will quickly form to the shape of its owner's feet and is heavily vented, so should make for an excellent choice in the summer months. RH

Weight
269
grams

9

www.scott-sports.com
Size tested EU 43
Colours white/green, white/red

Bontrager XXX Road £259.99

First unveiled last summer, the XXX Road are Bontrager's flagship shoe for 2015, and certainly hit the spot in a way we've come to expect from most products coming out of Wisconsin.

The size 43 shoes weigh in at a shade under 500g for the pair, nothing out of this world, but very respectable nonetheless. (If you're after seriously lightweight shoes then Trek offers the XXX LE, which are 25g lighter per shoe.)

However, what impressed me most was the comfort. The Bontragers come up a little large, but if you've got the right size the fit is outstanding, hugging your foot and keeping it nicely

in position without ever being tight. Two independent Boa dials as well as a Velcro strap also ensure plenty of adjustability.

All shoes at this price would be expected to have a super-stiff sole, and thankfully the XXX Roads are no different. The Platinum Series Carbon soles apparently hit 14 on Bontrager's stiffness index, and even if I am not entirely sure what that means, there was certainly no discernable flex with every last watt making its way to the pedals. HR

Weight
249
grams

9

www.bontrager.com
Size tested EU 43
Colours: red, white



Lake CX402 £369.99

The most expensive shoes on test, it goes without saying that we were looking for big things from the Lake CX402s in order to justify that slightly eye-watering price-tag.

Certainly nothing is compromised when it comes to performance. The Custom Fit carbon sole, which even rises up around the sides and back of the heel, is seriously stiff.

Like the Shimanos, the Lakes are heat mouldable, meaning that you should be able to look forward to a perfectly fitting shoe after a five-minute trip into the oven. Certainly this creates a shoe that, if you pardon the poorly chosen idiom, fits like a glove. This close fit meant I was

able to make the most of the ultra-stiff sole, although on longer rides I had to loosen the two Boa dials in order to relieve pressure.

As you might expect from a shoe of this price, there's barely an inch of synthetic material, with both the upper and the lining formed from kangaroo leather. This certainly gives the Lakes a luxurious feel, with the lining keeping my feet firmly in place, but the white outer developed some small folds which I thought seriously compromised the look.HR

Weight
287
grams

7

www.todayscyclist.co.uk

Size tested EU 42.5

Colours: black, white

Fizik R1 UOMU £299.99

Bling is the best way to describe Fizik's top-end shoes. Although it may be a case of form over function, the unique, attention-seeking carbon buckle certainly gets noticed. Velcro straps made from sail cloth, reinforced with Kevlar, complete the closure system. Kevlar is utilised, not for its bulletproof properties but for anti-stretch. The quality never lets up, with the sole of the R1s providing an incredibly stiff and substantial platform.

The fit on these shoes was exceptional. Sidas innersoles are fully heat mouldable, while kangaroo leather uppers adapt to your foot shape too. Some performance shoes, such as the

Specialized S-Works feature a narrow toe box, but I found the R1 more generous.

Kangaroo leather can be wiped clean but the large areas of mesh are less easy.

While this shoe is heavier than many others on test, it shouldn't be marked down in this regard. Despite being worn by David Millar, these are not aimed at Grand Tour contenders tearing chunks out of each other while ascending the Galibier. These are aimed at those who are less weight orientated and prefer riding in comfort and style. OB

Weight
360
grams

8

www.extrauk.co.uk

Size tested EU 45

Colours: white or black



Giro Empire SLX £249.99

In a world of Boa constrictors and convoluted ratchets, the simplicity of the Giro Empire SLX's laces is classy, and harks back to the lace-up days of old.

Designed with input from BMC pro Taylor Phinney, this feather-weight, super-stiff shoe has been favoured by Sir Bradley Wiggins — he wore them for his victories in the World Championships time trial and the Tour of California.

But how practical are laces? Well, I got on well with them. You can certainly adjust the fit to a high degree, but it takes a lot more time than a ratchet. Adjustment on the fly is not possible either. This is not a problem for the likes of Phinney,

but some riders do like to adjust their shoes as they ride.

The Easton EC90 soles are supremely stiff and we found them to be more rigid than those in the previous Empire shoes. The fit was very comfortable, with Giro supplying adjustable innersoles.

With regard to looks, the consensus at CW is that these shoes win! High marks are also awarded for practicality. The heel pads are easily replaced and the upper can be easily wiped clean. OB

Weight
202
grams

10

www.zyro.co.uk

Size tested EU 45

Colours: white, orange

**BEST
ON TEST**



DMT Vega £220

The DMT Vegas are great looking, and as far as dream shoes go, wallet friendly too.

I found the Vegas to be very comfortable. On a recent 225-mile training weekend from London to Bournemouth (and back!) they never gave me any pain or discomfort, which did surprise me. Usually with any shoe you'd need to work them in, especially a set of Italian-style road racers.

This comfort did not mean any stiffness had been comprised though, and no effort was wasted when riding. However, compared to Shimano's offering they lacked a little spark.

DMT's Vega, however, isn't best

suited to me. As a narrow-footed size 42 with a relatively low arch, I struggled to tighten these to fully obtain a secure fit. These will be far better suited to the wider footed cyclist. No half sizes means dropping down a size isn't really an option and that might limit some.

With a smart dimpled exterior, comfortable inner thanks to DMT's two material sockliner, a key Velcro spot that holds the tongue in place, as well as a robust heel and toe protectors, you get a solid purchase with the Vega. SL

Weight
235
grams

7

www.paligap.cc

Size tested EU 42

Colour white/black, black/yellow



Shimano SH-R321 £299.99

Many have hotly anticipated the updated version of Shimano's successful SH-R320 road shoe, the (aptly named) SH-R321. Described with phrases such as "wrap like" and "glove like fit" with a new "surround", it certainly needed to be well fitting, and indeed it is.

At £299.99, this is a high-priced bit of kit — as expected in a dream shoe test. Out of the box the shoe feels light, fits well and looks nice too, although from a riding position it looks a bit odd due to the colour scheme that splits the shoe down the middle. Thankfully, I could adjust the instep height, as I found the one provided was a little high for my

arch — although you can heat-mould these, I didn't feel it necessary.

Shimano says the R321 offers a 12/12 stiffness rating, and the shoes diligently provided good power transfer from the stiff sole without being harsh.

Overall the Shimanos tick both comfort and stiffness boxes. Annoyingly, I did find a few niggles, one being the retention system, which was on the fiddly side, and the wrap style seemed to cause a little pinch when fully tightened up. SL

Weight
268
grams

8

www.madison.co.uk

Size tested EU 42

Colour black/white



Verdict

This dream shoe test couldn't be given to just one person. As we discovered in testing, there is a huge variety of foot sizes and shapes, with each individual having their own personal preference. Instep height, narrow or wide, even most people have a larger left foot than right. What one rider might call the best shoe in the world will be another's worst nightmare.

Before looking at weight, style or colour options you need to think about your feet; are they long and thin or wide and short? Each manufacturer has subtle differences that form during the design stage. DMT and Bontrager, unlike Shimano and Giro, favour the wider footed, while Fizik leans towards high-arched feet, differing from the relatively low-arched offering from Lake. It is certainly worth

trying a set on before you buy.

Shoe shine

Giro has made a great pair of booties. The SLX is by far the lightest and one of the lowest priced on test without compromising on looks, comfort or stiffness. Yes, laces will divide opinion but in terms of getting the right closure, for each individual without the need for heat moulding, laces are one of the better options.

The best of the rest sit between Bontrager, Shimano and Scott, which all perform well in terms of fit and stiffness. DMT and Crono brought a few little niggles, while Mavic caused concern with its new aero-flap. Finally with Lake and its CX402 it was very difficult to overlook the £369.99 price tag, but if ultimate stiffness is what you're after, go for these.



FITNESS

How do I... strengthen my quads?

Our in-depth guide to powering up your pistons using on and off-the-bike moves

Words: Marc Abbott

Whether you're Marcel Kittel or an everyday cyclist, improving the strength of the quadricep muscles in your thighs is enormously important. Personal trainer Rob Jones, of Stride Fit explains how to boost them with exercises both on and off the bike.

"Your quads work more than even your glutes," says Jones. "They're the workhorse of the muscles that turn the pedals, especially when your leg is at full extension."

But how to ensure these pistons have what it takes to power you up a climb or even endure an all-day ride? If

you'd rather do your training on the bike, Jones suggests:

"Sets of 15-second sprints with decent resistance, or even hill repeats are useful. But make sure you're giving the muscles time to recover so you can complete the next interval properly. Try a 15-second sprint followed by 1min 45sec of recovery."

Even getting out of the saddle can help. "Try lifting yourself slightly off the seat when you're riding," Jones says. "Don't stand fully. This will put extra load on the quads, and also engage your core muscles."

If you're aiming to work on leg strength indoors, the good old squat is your friend. Jones describes how to perform the perfect body weight squat: "With your feet shoulder-width apart, aim to lower yourself over two seconds to a seated position, so that your thighs are horizontal with your knees tracking over your feet."

"Keep your chest puffed out and stick your bum out, keeping a straight spine. Hold this for a second and return to the standing position. Make sure your arms are outstretched throughout. Also, keep 70 per cent of your weight on your heels."

And how many times should you be doing this? "For an endurance cyclist training for sportives, aim for sets of around 12-18 to start with, to train your slow-twitch muscle fibres", recommends Jones.

He continues:

"An integral part of exercising the quads

is stretching them after your efforts, to make sure that the muscle doesn't overly shorten, and to bring more blood into the area. "Try kneeling in front of a bench, facing away with your foot on the seat and knee on the floor. That's a good way of stretching the quads out fully," suggests Jones. "On the bike, do some light spinning after intervals, for example," he adds.

Essential points

- Make your intervals intense
- Don't forget to recover properly
- Stretching is important
- The squat is king

Imagine you're lowering yourself onto a child's wooden stool. Keep your chest out, a neutral spine and ensure (if you've a full-length mirror handy) that your thighs are at least parallel with the floor — or past parallel for a deeper squat and more benefit.

Stretching your quads is as important as exercising them, as it helps to get blood into the worked muscle and also prevents the quadricep from shortening.

YOU SAY

Leg press is very good as it puts less strain on the upper body compared to a squat.

Joe White

Front squats are specifically better. Power cleans or hang cleans are also helpful.

Rhys Howell



Maintaining perfect form during your squats is key to making them efficient, and avoiding injury. Ensure your knees track over your ankles and toes, and that there is no twisting of the feet. Keep everything in line and you can't go wrong.

Box jumps, burpees, weighted walking lunges and broad jumps.

Dustin Stalter

I think the step machine is somewhere between squat and spinning, I love it. And it really works.

Kovacsics Jenő

Explosive squat jumps are very effective.

Andy Milners

Climb stairs — lots of stairs. Cyclists always do well in this sort of challenge vs other athletes.

Erik Van Bommel

Things to do this week

Try coconut oil

Coconut oil's unique combination of fatty acids can have profound positive effects on health, including fat loss and brain function.

Coconut oil is rich in a certain type of saturated fat — medium chain triglycerides. These are metabolised differently to normal saturated fats found in foods such as steak and cheese; they go straight to the liver from the digestive tract, where they can be used quickly for energy. Ditch your olive oil for coconut oil.

Get a Swiss Ball

The whole concept of a Swiss Ball is to create an unstable platform. This will place more demand on the body as it tries to not only achieve stability, forcing it to use smaller stabilising muscles, but also to cope with the exercises you are performing. For example, a simple sit-up will help strengthen your abdominal muscles predominantly. But on a Swiss Ball, you will also activate your erector spinae muscles, as well as your glutes and hamstrings to maintain stability. It's a far better all-round workout, and very effective for cyclists.



Try PowerBar PowerGel Shots

As the days start to last that little bit longer, we can finally begin heading out on three to four-hour rides. Longer rides require refuelling and, if you're slightly bored with the usual energy gels and bars, then these PowerGel Shots could be just the thing.

Essentially chewy gel sweets, each bag costs just £2 and contains 48g of carbohydrates — more than many energy bars and gels.

According to PowerBar, the shots contain a C2Max Dual Carbohydrate Mix, which it says provides the body with more fuel.

The PowerGels taste great without being too sickly and now come in a hygienic resealable pouch.

www.powerbar.com



50 ways to lose weight



Determined to lose weight this year? Take the fast route to success with these scientifically supported weight-loss tips from resident dietitian *Laura Tilt*

According to market research from Mintel, 29 million of us Brits are trying to slim. If you're on board with a weight-loss goal, the good news is that there are scientifically proven habits that can help.

Forget fad diets — from your kitchen cupboards to your office desk, here's what really works.

START HERE...

1 Keep a food diary

Yes, it takes time but it works. In a study from the Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research, dieters keeping food

records lost twice as much weight as a control group.

2 Photograph your food

Instagramming food has become a social media craze, but snapping your meals could help with weight loss. In one 2008 study from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, researchers found that photographing meals was an effective deterrent to overeating.

3 Give yourself a calorie target

Whether it's low-carb, low-fat or fasting, diets ultimately work, if they work, because they reduce calorie intake. Give yourself a target and you'll be more likely to succeed. Work out

your daily needs using an online calorie calculator and track your intake using a smartphone app.

ON THE BIKE

4 Strength train

All exercise benefits weight loss, but strength training protects the lean mass that keeps your metabolic rate revved up. According to scientists from Quincy College in the US, 10 weeks of resistance training is sufficient to increase lean mass by 1.5kg and metabolic rate by seven per cent. Aim for two or three sessions a week.



A moderate AM amble will set you up for the day

5 Get on your bike in the morning
Just 45 minutes of moderate morning exercise was enough to reduce cravings and brain activation in response to sweet foods in a 2014 study from Brigham Young University.

6 Ride with a buddy
Lack of motivation stopping you exercising? Get a training buddy. Research from Michigan State University found women cycled on a stationary bike for twice as long when working with a virtual partner than when cycling alone.

CHANGE THE WAY YOU EAT

7 Breakfast like a king
Eating breakfast won't magically melt away the pounds, but studies do show breakfast eaters tend to have fewer unhealthy habits. Last year researchers at Bath University found breakfast eaters burned 400kcal more a day than breakfast skippers through spontaneous low to moderate activity.

8 Increase your protein intake
The benefits of increasing protein intake for weight loss are hard to ignore. In a 2013 study published in the *FASEB Journal*, adults assigned to a weight-loss diet with double the recommended daily intake of protein lost more body fat and less lean mass than a standard protein group.

9 Swap cereal for eggs
Lots of breakfast cereals are high in sugar and low in fibre. Scientists at the Pennington Biomedical Research Centre discovered that overweight adults swapping ready-to-eat cereal for eggs felt fuller and went on to eat fewer calories at lunch.

10 Drink a glass of water before your meal
It sounds faddy, but thirst can be mistaken for hunger. In one study published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, dieters drinking a glass of water before meals went on eat 75kcal fewer.

11 Snack on high-protein yoghurt
Afternoon snacker? Eat yoghurt to get a grip on appetite control. In a study published in the *Nutrition Journal*, women eating a high-protein yoghurt after lunch felt less hungry during the afternoon and ate around 100kcal fewer at dinner than groups eating chocolate or crackers.

12 Eat an apple before lunch
According to researchers at Pennsylvania State University, adults who munched a raw apple before a pasta-based lunch consumed 200kcal fewer than those eating apple sauce or drinking apple juice.

13 Swap biscuits for nuts
Nuts are high in calories, but nut-eaters tend to be slimmer than those who avoid them. Overweight adults swapping carbohydrate snacks for almonds (containing the same number of calories) lost more weight and body fat than a control group.

14 Start with a bowl of soup
Headed to the canteen for lunch? Grab a bowl of soup. Men and women who started their meal with a vegetable soup consumed 20 per cent fewer calories overall — even when soup calories were included.

15 Increase your fibre intake
High-fibre foods take longer to empty from the stomach, helping control appetite. Include more wholegrain bread, oats, pulses, fruits and vegetables to benefit.

16 Don't ditch dairy
Milk and dairy are often abandoned in weight-loss diets, but the calcium and protein content benefit weight loss. In one US trial, overweight adults including three portions of dairy foods as part of a calorie-controlled diet lost twice as much body fat compared to those eating no dairy.

17 Moderate carbs, don't ditch them
Low-carb diets result in faster weight loss initially, but studies show that, after six months, there's little if any difference between low-carb and other approaches. In fact, it's the degree of compliance and calorie restriction that dictates success. Eating low-carb will also zap your ability to train hard, so moderate carbs but don't ditch them.

18 Drink a whey protein shake
Whey protein doesn't just support muscle recovery; it can also benefit body composition. In a 2007 study in the journal *Nutrition and Metabolism*, adults supplementing a weight loss diet with a whey protein shake before breakfast and dinner lost more body fat and preserved more lean muscle than a control group.

19 Consider a fast day
If daily dieting is too much to bear, consider alternating days of normal eating with two fast days per week, restricting intake to 500kcal a day. Research is in the early stages, but studies suggest this pattern of dieting is as effective as daily calorie restriction.

20 Eat your fruit, don't drink it
Juice fan? Switch it for the whole fruit. Adults eating whole fruit felt fuller than when consuming the same number of calories in juice or pureed fruit.

21 Swap your soda
Last year the World Health Organisation published new guidelines based on evidence that sugar-sweetened drinks are associated with weight gain. ▶

22 Go low GI

In 2012 researchers at the obesity prevention centre in Boston found a low glycaemic index (GI) diet more beneficial for reducing hunger and maintaining metabolic rate than a low-carb or low-fat approach.

23 Cut your liquid calories

Calories from alcohol, smoothies and lattes are easily forgotten but quickly add up. Liquid calories don't satiate like solids, and studies show we fail to compensate for the calories consumed by eating less during the day.

24 Eat more fish

Oily fish is rich in omega 3, a group of essential fats that play a role in regulating body fat levels. In a 2014 study, overweight men supplementing their diet with omega 3 fish oils lost fat mass and experienced improvements in levels of inflammation.



REORGANISE YOUR KITCHEN

25 Rearrange your fridge

Research from Cornell University shows you're three times more likely to eat healthy food if it's at eye level, so increase your chances by placing fruits,

vegetables and nutritious foods in prime position.

26 Cook with chilli

Cooking with spices doesn't just give your food a lift, it could also help curb appetite. In a small study from Purdue University, one gram of cayenne pepper in a meal reduced cravings for salty sweet and fatty foods.

27 Move tempting foods out of sight

Studies show that the more visible junk food is, the more likely you are to eat it. To overcome visual cues to overeating, move sweets, chocolate and biscuits into opaque containers and on to the top shelf.

28 Quit buying family-sized packs

Portion size your downfall? Last year researchers at the University of Tennessee found single-serve packs were effective in cutting portion size and calorie intake.

29 Cook like you're in the Med

A Mediterranean-style diet isn't just good for your heart; it's also rated as one of the best for weight loss. Make the change by cutting processed food, using olive oil in place of other fats and increasing your intake fish, fruit and vegetables.

TAKE NOTE AT THE TABLE

30 Dine like a pauper

There may be some truth to the proverb 'breakfast like a king'. Last year scientists at Tel Aviv University found dieters eating most of their calories at breakfast lost twice as much weight as those eating most of their calories at dinner, despite their overall intake being the same.

31 Downsize your dinner plate

Think the size of your dinner plate doesn't matter? Think again — according to research from Cornell University, changing your dinner plate size from 12in to 10in results in 22 per cent fewer calories served, without any change in satiety.

32 Take away serving bowls

If you finish eating and there's still food in front of you, chances are you'll eat it. Researcher Brian Wansink found that adults ate 20 per cent less when they served their food at the cooker versus from serving dishes at the table.

33 Half-fill your plate with veg

Instead of half-filling your dinner plate with pasta, rice or other carbs, half-

fill it with vegetables and reduce carbs to a quarter. Studies show it's the volume of food we eat, not the calories, that determines satiety.

34 Love your salad bowl

Not a fan of soup? Start dinner with salad. In a 2013 study, men and women eating a vegetable salad before their main meal lost more weight than a control group.

35 Quit eating from packets

Cornell University researchers found we consume more when eating from open bags. The bigger the bag, the more we tend to eat. Quit munching biscuits, crisps and nuts from out of their packets — take out a portion, reseal and put away.

36 Chew gum after your meal

If your sweet tooth is your downfall, pop a stick of gum. In one 2007 study published in the journal *Appetite*, adults who chewed gum after lunch experienced fewer cravings for sugary foods.

37 Slow down your eating

If you're in the habit of wolfing down your food, take note: it takes 20 minutes for your brain to realise your stomach is full. In one study from Texas University, adults instructed to eat slowly consumed around 100kcal fewer and were less hungry later in the day.

38 Quit eating in front of the television

Last year Swedish researchers found TV watching encouraged overeating, regardless of hunger. The same goes for surfing the web and reading magazines.

WHEN YOU'RE IN THE OFFICE

39 Keep a tidy desk

Researchers at the Cornell lab found cluttered spaces prompted overeating on snack foods when compared to a tidy space. The belief is that an organised space prompts self-control. Worth a try.

40 Take the stairs

Studies show you can't offset a sedentary eight hours sitting at your desk with an hour in the gym. Researchers at the Mayo Clinic found office workers encouraged to stand and walk during the day lost 9lb over six months — 10,000 steps a day is recommended for weight loss. Get a free pedometer app and see how you fare.

41 Minimise stress

Stress hormones are linked

to central fat storage (the kind that increases the risk of heart problems) and an increase in cravings for sugary, carbohydrate-rich foods. Take up meditation (try headspace.com), burn it off on the bike or take 10 from your desk.

42 Brown bag your lunch

According to a study published in the Economic Research Report, meals eaten away from home are on average 150kcal larger than those made at home. Packed lunches make sense.

AT HOME

43 Get your partner on board

A recently published study in *JAMA Internal Medicine* found you're more likely make a health change if your partner does too.

44 Get online support

If family and friends fail to get on board, consider support from online forums or a virtual weight loss coach. A University of Vermont study found internet-based weight-loss programmes were more effective than those involving face-to-face meetings.

45 Maintain healthy habits at the weekend

Data from the University of Connecticut found that adults consumed around 400kcal extra on Saturday and Sunday. The message? Don't stop tracking your intake over the weekend.

46 Go to bed early

Just one night of poor sleep increases hunger hormones and cravings for junk food. Get to bed early, switch off electronic devices and make your room as dark as possible to promote restful sleep.

47 Walk before dinner

Go for a stroll before dinner and you could end up eating less. Research from the University of Glasgow found a 20-minute walk before a meal was enough to reduce appetite.

48 Revoke your alcohol habits

Alcohol delivers a triple whammy against weight loss. It's high in calories, triggers hunger and lower inhibitions, meaning you're more likely to overeat. Cut your intake in half and swap beers and wine for spirits and slimline mixers.

49 Curb your takeaway habit

Takeaways typically contain three times the calories of a home-cooked meal. Ditch the sides, choose plain rice over fried and opt for tomato-based sauces.

50 Weigh yourself regularly

Studies regularly find links between self-monitoring and weight-loss success. Members of the National Weight Control Registry (the largest study of dieters who have successfully lost at least 60lb and kept it off) weigh themselves at least once a week.



Don't be scared of the scales — weigh yourself regularly

‘Cycling helps us cope’

Richmond Denton fits in 150 miles per week while working full-time and caring for his wife

Denton squeezes in training whenever his busy life allows

Simon Schofield

Relentless. It's a word cyclists know well — usually applied to a long climb or a brutal headwind. When I suggest to Richmond Denton that the word could apply equally to his life, he pauses, but not for long: “Yeah, a lot of people say that. It's probably true.”

Denton, 46, looks after his wife Jo, who has secondary progressive multiple sclerosis. He has a demanding full-time job as a designer. He can ride a ‘10’ in around 20 minutes and a ‘25’ in 54 minutes. That requires training, requires time: the one thing Denton doesn't have.

“Jo needs full-time care. At night, it takes around an hour to get her ready for bed. It's quite common that she will wake five or six times in the night. She may need the toilet or she may need her position shifting. I can't remember the last time I had an uninterrupted night's sleep,” says Denton.

Hard day's night

A disturbed night is usually followed by an early start, as Denton prepares breakfast for his wife and ensures she will have what she needs during the day. The evenings are taken up with caring for Jo and preparing for the next day.

Jo's illness has worsened in recent years, attacking her spinal cord with increasing ferocity. She lost mobility, endured spasms in her limbs and gradually declined so that she spends almost all her time in a wheelchair. She also suffered extreme fatigue. The couple coped alone — with Denton somehow finding time to squeeze in rides to maintain fitness.

“But we were walking towards the edge of a cliff — and eventually we went over it.”

Denton had a breakdown; nobody gave it that name but everybody knew what it was. The couple simply could not cope anymore.

Jo had a fall, was hospitalised and found herself in Denton's words “in a highly emotional and distressed state.” As was he.

The couple contacted social services and got part-time help, with periodic respite care. Denton came up with a plan to maintain — and improve — his fitness.

“It might seem selfish, but Jo understands: cycling is my release. It's the time in my life that MS can't touch. It's my time away from the illness.”

The plan involves laser-like organisational skills and complete focus, along with carefully selected help and advice from professionals.

“The days of getting on my bike and seeing where the road takes you are long gone. Every single ride I do now is planned to the minute.

“Focusing on time trialling is useful, because I think I can still be competitive — without as many training miles.”

With such a time-starved routine, Denton makes the most of his commute, which is, in fact, a fasted training ride. He leaves home at 7am for a 90-minute hilly loop every day, which leaves him time

How it worked for me

- Total organisation — Denton is always ready to ride, niggles fixed and kit sorted, delays ruled out.
- Maximise ride time — the first ride of the day is fasted. This technique works for both weight loss or maintenance and fitness development.
- Get expert advice — a coach and a nutritionist, though an expense, are investments Denton does not regret, because they deliver results.
- Get your head straight — Denton's time on the bike is a psychological escape that both he and Jo need.

to arrive at work, change and eat breakfast for a 9am start.

Denton is also fastidious about preparing his bike, clothing and gear. “The bike is always clean and ready... Lights are always charged, clothing laid out.”

He decided to take on a coach to maximise the time he has to spend on the bike. “If you are

limited by time, a coach is a great asset. It seems to work — I have definitely improved since I've been coached.”

“He understands my life situation and he understands [why] if I have a missed session. He doesn't beat me up about it.

“Since I started being coached, I have improved every year even though I'm another year older.”

Weekend workload

At the weekend, Denton again rises as early as possible and tries to get in a couple of hours. He usually manages to achieve his weekly goal of 150 miles.

But his relentless schedule began to cause problems. “My big problem started to become proper recovery. I could get the riding in, but if Jo needed a lot of help, then I wasn't getting good recovery time. I started to go down with a lot of annoying colds and niggling illnesses.”

His next step was to consult a sports nutritionist. “She looked at my diet — and my lifestyle — and decided that I wasn't getting enough protein or fat, and she also identified what she thought was a problem with nutrient timing.”

The advice worked. “Depending on the strength of the field, I can usually hold my head up high,” he says.

“I think Jo is perhaps in no worse a position than other cycling widows. We've talked about it with a psychologist, and he has convinced me that I have to be selfish, or what some people might see as selfish, for the good of both of us.”

“Getting through this has brought us closer together. We wouldn't have got through the bad times if we didn't love each other and had a basically very strong relationship.” ■

The uneasy art of escape

Matt Seaton's book *The Escape Artist* dealt with the pressure of his wife's terminal illness by occasionally escaping on his bike. Doing so meant he had to learn to handle a degree of guilt: “Should I be out here when I could be at home?” the internal voice asks.

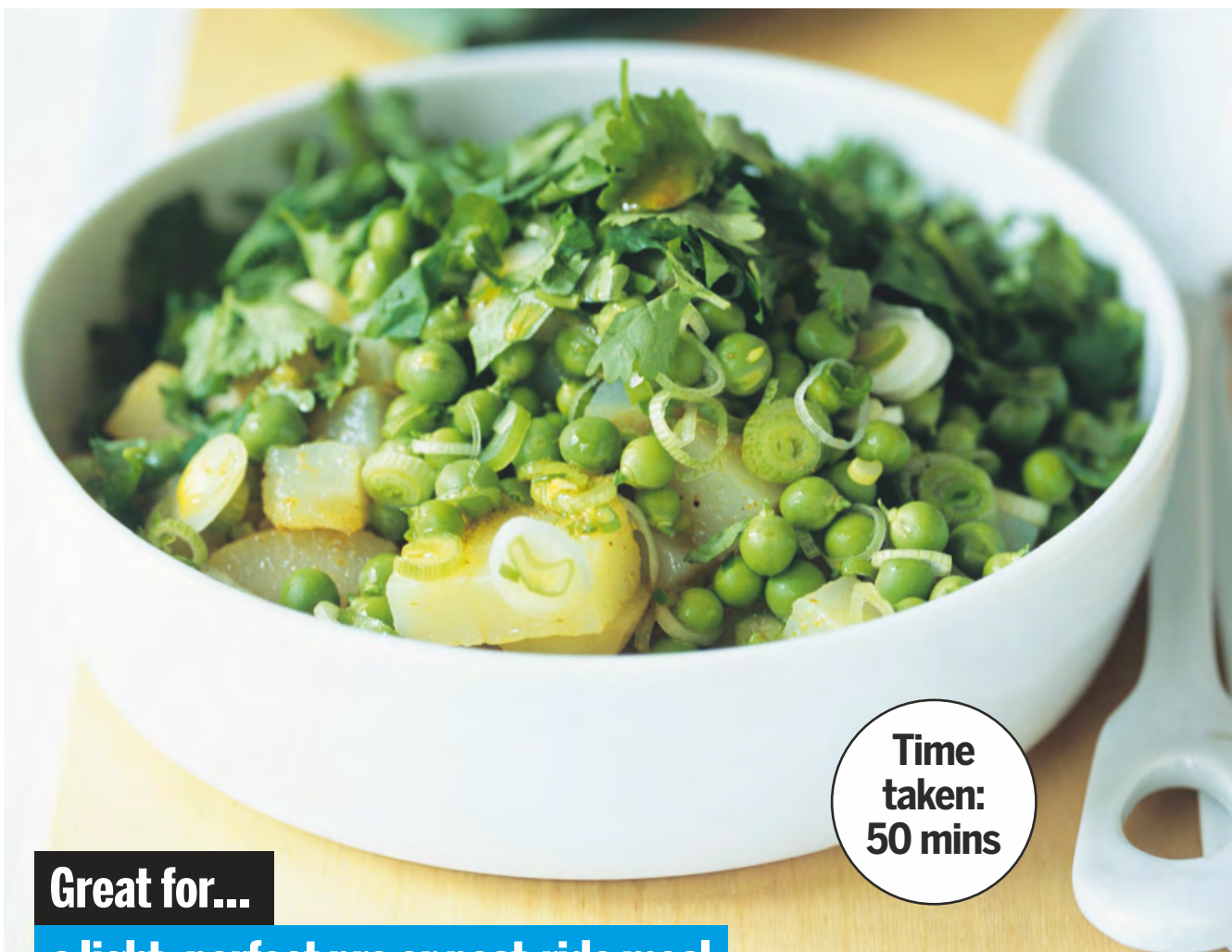
Seaton's book struck a chord with Denton. It showed that escaping is ultimately a benefit to both people, carer and cared-for, who are going through tough times.

There are lots of different ways of squeezing cycling into a life filled with work,

domestic and other commitments.

Some cyclists follow Denton's path by training early in the morning, or convert the commute into a slightly extended ride with a serious training purpose.

The ‘guilt’ is another matter and generally ends up being a process of careful negotiation with some compromises. But if there is a difficult or stressful situation to deal with, it helps if the people involved can find an outlet, and cycling as an escape, however temporary or brief, is among the best.



**Time
taken:
50 mins**

Great for...

a light, perfect pre or post-ride meal

Pea and potato salad with spring onions

The beauty of this meal is that it can be eaten either before your ride, to fuel your muscles, or once you return home to replenish your glycogen stores. It's full of the carbohydrates and protein your body needs and is only 300kcal to boot. It's the perfect cycling meal and very timely as we approach spring.

INGREDIENTS:

- 500g waxy potatoes
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp caraway seeds
- 500g peas
- 1 tbsp hot mustard
- ½ tbsp sugar
- 150ml warm vegetable stock
- 5 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 1 bunch spring onions (scallions)
- 3 tbsp olive oil

NUTRITION PER SERVING:

300
kcalories
37.3g
carbohydrates
12.2g
protein
10.8g
fat

METHOD:

- 1) Cook the potatoes in salted boiling water with the caraway seeds for about 25 minutes. Peel and leave to cool.
- 2) Blanch the peas in salted boiling water for 1-2 minutes. Drain well.
- 3) Slice the potatoes and place them in a bowl with the warm peas.
- 4) Mix together the mustard, sugar, vegetable stock and vinegar. Season with salt and ground black pepper and add spring onions. Add the mixture to the peas and potatoes and leave to stand for about 15 minutes.
- 5) Mix the oil and check the seasoning. Serve in bowls garnished with parsley.

How mudguards could save your life

Mud splashes from riding can cause deadly E.Coli infections

George Winter

Mudguards can help protect you from serious illness, as a recent case involving a cyclist who contracted a life-threatening infection caused by the bacterium E.Coli 0157:H7, has shown.

A 23-year-old male was hospitalised in Aberdeen with vomiting, stomach pain and bloody diarrhoea, according to a report in the *Journal of Infection Prevention*. Common risk factors associated with E.Coli 0157:H7 were excluded on investigation, but the man revealed that eight days earlier he had competed in a cycling event along wet, muddy tracks in rural eastern Scotland. He'd removed the mudguards from his bike to reduce weight, causing watery mud to splash into his face during the race.

It's thought that this was how he became infected with the bug, which is found in animal faeces and farm

slurry. The cyclist recovered.

The protective effect of mudguards was dramatically demonstrated in 2013, when Scandinavian researchers reported the results of a study in the journal *Epidemiology and Infection*. The Birkebeinerrittet — one of the world's biggest mountain bike races — is held annually in Norway, with the main event attracting around 14,000 competitors. Following the 2009 race, 3,800 participants were affected with gastrointestinal illness, giving an attack rate of 16.3 per cent. The main risk factor was mud splashes to the face.

The researchers stated: "As a way of reducing the risk of gastrointestinal disease, the use of mudguards should be recommended. While front mudguards can help reduce risk for the individual participant, rear mudguards are more important in reducing the risk in cyclists following."



TAKE HOME TRAINING SESSION

Improve technique and leg strength

One-legged drills are a great way to isolate and improve your pedalling technique for efficient riding

One-legged intervals are a great way to improve technique and build leg strength.

It's very easy to forget the fundamentals of a good pedal stroke so it's worth making time to focus on it.

Pedalling with just one leg will help improve cycling efficiency, encouraging you to focus on a smooth pedalling motion. Using just one leg to spin the pedal will also help activate and recruit more leg muscles, improving your efficiency and strength.

During your 'effort', use a gear that offers some resistance but

not too much. Aim for a comfortable cadence of 90rpm. However, if you start to stomp down and begin bouncing in the saddle, you are in too easy a gear. Remember, your pedalling should be smooth and rhythmic. Clip both feet in for the rest period.

Time taken:
27 mins

Time (minutes)	Cadence (RPM)	Zone
0-10	80	1
10-12	90 (right leg only)	3
12-13	85	2
13-15	90 (left leg only)	3
15-16	85	2
16-18	90 (right leg only)	3
18-19	85	2
19-21	80 (left leg only)	3
21-22	85	2
22-27	80	1

Effort	You can	It feels like you're...	Use it for...	% Max heart rate	% FT power
Easy Zone 1	Chat freely	Warming up	Warm-ups, cool-downs and recovery	60-65%	56-75%
Steady Zone 2	Speak one sentence at a time	Riding along in the bunch on the flat	Long rides	65-75%	76-90%
Brisk Zone 3	Speak a few words at a time	Breathing deeply and working hard	Long efforts of 10 to 20min	75-82%	91-105%
Hard Zone 4	Say only one word at a time	Really attacking (perhaps on a climb)	Efforts lasting 2-8min	82-89%	106-120%
Very hard Zone 5	G grunt and gasp	Sprinting	Efforts lasting less than 2min	89%-MHR	121%+

Dartmoor Demon

CW
Difficulty
rating:
9/10

This
year's
event:
May 2



**55
miles**

**1,678
metres
ascent**

Devilish climbs and divine views combine at this Devon sportive

If you're looking for hills, then you've come to the right place. For every view and expansive scenic spot that Dartmoor offers, there's usually a circa 20 per cent hill for you to struggle up before you get to it.

But it's that combination of challenge and surroundings that makes the moors an unforgettable place for a bike ride. It offers ►

Where is it?

The event starts and finishes at Exeter Racecourse at the end of the M5, just off the A38. It sits to the north-east of the Dartmoor National Park. This undisturbed and picturesque setting enjoys protected status and offers vistas from granite tors, rolling open moorland to wooded river valleys.

Why ride it?

With some of the most notable climbs in the UK featured on the courses, it's a chance to really challenge yourself and benefit from superb organisation and support. It will certainly be a ride that you'll be telling people about for a long time to come. Choose between the 55-mile or 95-mile routes.

History

This will be the third edition of the Dartmoor Demon in *Cycling Weekly's* ever-growing sportive series. While it was far from being the first sportive to use the area, its organisation and choice of route have already made it a leading contender amongst other events in the area.

How to enter

You can enter online at bookmyride.co.uk. If there are still places available on the day you can head down to register.

HQ details

Exeter Racecourse is easily accessed by car, being five miles from the end of the M5 southbound, on the A38. Or you can take a train to Exeter St Davids or Exeter St Thomas station, but you'll need to get a taxi to the racecourse.

Where to stay

The Exeter Court Hotel is two miles from the racecourse. In Exeter city centre, eight miles away, the Queens Court Hotel and City Gate Hotel are similarly priced alternatives. Both Farmborough House and Mill Farm B&B are three miles from the start line.

Where to eat

There's plenty of options in Exeter including Italian at On the Waterfront, the Thai Orchid and El Bocado Tapas. Nearer the racecourse in Kenn you'll find the Ley Arms, which offers a varied pub menu.

Local bike shop

Independent retailer Partridge Cycles is just over three miles away from the start. If you're south of the start line then Hot Pursuit Cycles, Kingsteignton will help if you've forgotten something.



Dartmoor: never too far from a 20 per cent slope

you some beautiful punishment.

Starting out from Exeter Racecourse, just outside the borders of the National Park, the route rolls south with relative ease on a long descent down Old Exeter Road and Bottle Bridge Hill, into the small town of Chudleigh. It's easy to begin feeling optimistic at this point. Keep it cautious, as with narrow country roads and a lot of riders starting at the same time, you could find yourself bunched up. As great as it feels, just keep in mind that this will be a long climb back to the finish.

Conserve as much energy as you can for the latter parts whenever possible. There's very little flat around Dartmoor, so getting ahead of yourself can leave you feeling short on the climbs to come.

Heading onto the moors from the east side, you're soon among the sheep and ponies. Once past the town of Moretonhampstead the moors open out and the wind becomes another factor. A headwind and you'll feel like you're trudging through mud despite generally good road surfaces, but catch a tailwind and you can feel like you're flying. It's worth taking the time to enjoy the view (try and spot the old prison down towards Princetown if you can) but make sure you

keep eating and drinking.

Stock up as much as you can at the feed station, 25 miles in at Postbridge, before you ride westward towards the route split. If you want to take on an extra 40 miles of steep, undulating terrain then continue on the Epic route to the edge of Dartmoor, towards Dousland and Yelverton, before looping round to join together again.

Climb of Dartmeet

The choice here is not only taking on the extra metres uphill, but whether to take the climb of Dartmeet that approaches from the north or Poundsgate from the south; we chose the former.

Both climbs are hard going, but the relentless gradients of Dartmeet (up to 25 per cent) make it the tougher of the two. You'll be out of the saddle for the most part, but a good surface eases the way a little. Make sure you're equipped with at least a '28' cog on the back with a compact chainset. We'd probably advise using the lowest gear you can get.

There's more to come just six miles later though, with Widecombe. It might have a lower maximum gradient than Dartmeet, but at this point your legs are probably burning and you just want to get it over with. Long, straight and steep, keep your eyes on the prize as you grind to the top — the descent on the other side.

Feed up and start to recover as you begin to descend out of the moors. Don't get too comfortable though, as while you begin to get a sense of civilisation again, there's the climb back up to the finish. It's easy to forget this after everything you've been through already, but could eventually prove the most challenging part.

ORGANISER'S TARGET TIMES

Route	Award	Distance	Avg speed (men)	Time	Avg speed (women)	Time
Epic	Gold	95m	>15.5mph	< 6hr 7min	>14.5mph	< 6hr 33min
Epic	Silver	95m	>14mph	< 6hr 47min	>13mph	< 7hr 18min
Epic	Bronze	95m	<14mph	> 6hr 47min	<13mph	> 7hr 18min
Standard	Gold	55m	>15.5mph	< 3hr 32min	>14.5mph	< 3hr 47min
Standard	Silver	55m	>14mph	< 3hr 55min	>13mph	< 4hr 13min
Standard	Bronze	55m	<14mph	> 3hr 55min	<13mph	> 4hr 13min

The challenges

1 Doccombe climb

It's not steep but quite long at three miles. The gradual ascent towards Moretonhampstead and into the moors can lead you to push yourself too hard, and resisting this is the biggest test. Keep it steady and save yourself.

2 Old Exeter Road

What's a nice descent at the start of the ride is a sting in the tail when you climb back up at the end. It's a long climb out of Chudleigh to the finish, and reaches over 10 per cent in parts, making it both a mental and physical test.

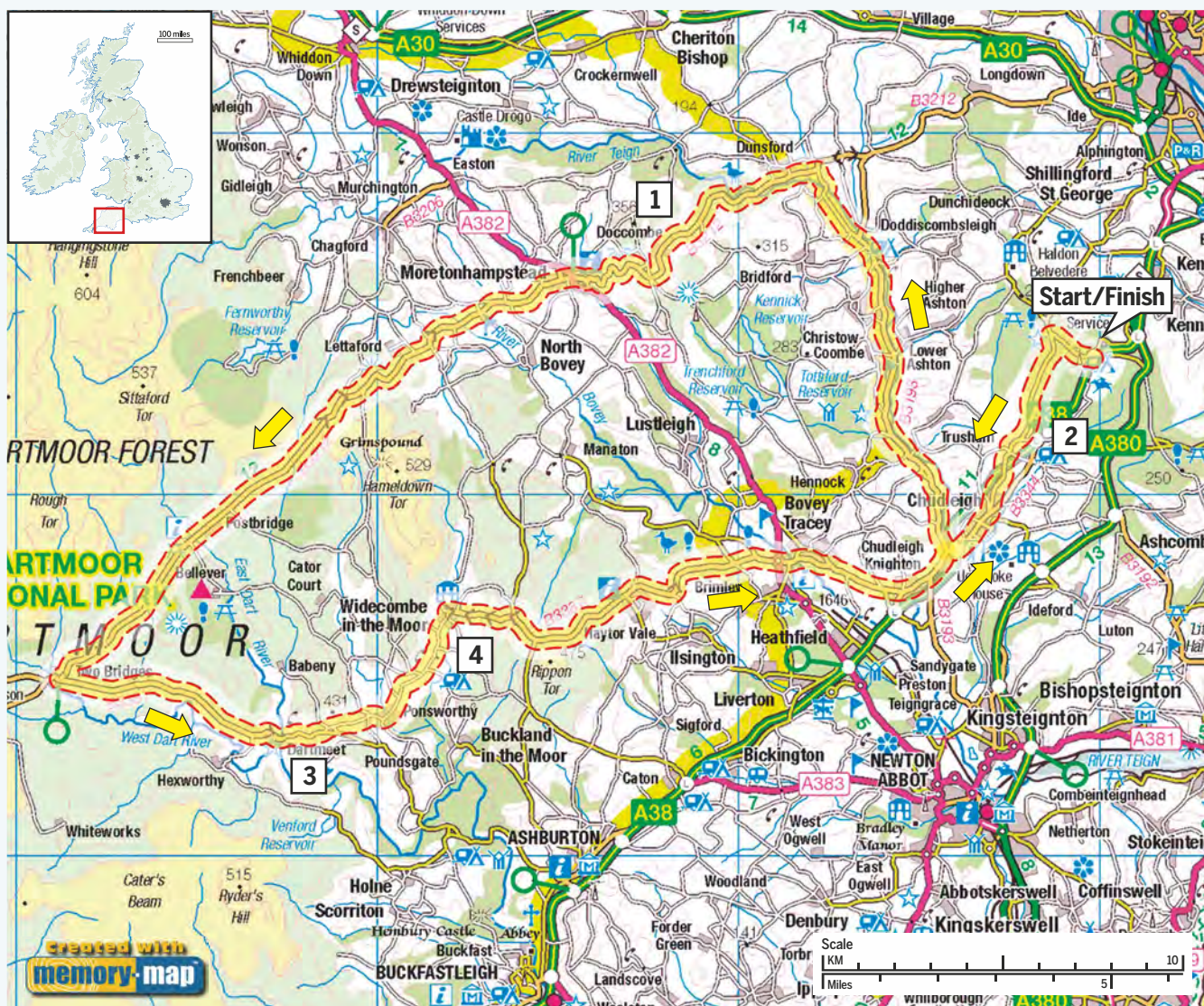
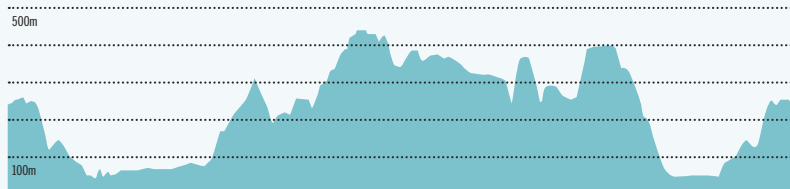
3 Dartmeet

The half-mile long climb of Dartmeet hits 25 per cent at one point, and is fairly unforgiving so should not be taken lightly. This will feel like a marathon so don't go too hard at the bottom and don't stop!

NAIL IT

4 Widecombe

Every rider on the day will be required to take on this one-mile push. You'll pass through the quaint village dotted with pretty teasops, but don't let that fool you. Widecombe is fairly straight and steep as it looms over you, which can be enough to finish you off before you've even begun. Try and take the climb bit by bit and don't think about how steep it is (or how much your legs are burning). The feed station is located at the top, too — you'll definitely feel like you've earned a decent respite once you've made it.



Event website: bookmyride.co.uk

Chippenham and District Wheelers

Hugh Gladstone rides through rural Wiltshire with a club that combines heritage with inclusiveness

You don't have to have a water softener installed to be a member of the Chippenham and District Wheelers... but it helps. Even amongst the hordes that descended on Yorkshire for the Tour de France last year, members of the club could hear others in the crowd picking out their distinctive well-known jersey. But those white and orange colours won't half show the dirt after a mid-January bash around Wiltshire's exceedingly muddy lanes. The secret then to keeping the club's bright kit stain-free, we learn, is to rinse and scrub the dirt out straight after use with very soft water before chucking it in the machine.

Despite the flat grey murk hanging over the western fringes of Chippenham it is thus in a blaze of brightness that a small fraction of the 500-strong club snake away from the entrance of the town's rugby club. There's a parallel here with the cycling career of Mark Otridge, the man who leads Chippenham's club rides. He took up cycling after giving up rugby. In his late 40s at the time, his body was no longer so keen on the battering it was getting. Joining the Chippenham ticked all the right boxes: exercise, fresh air, camaraderie.

And no one trying to rip your ear off.

"We do anything between

35 and 70 miles," explains Otridge. "We go from three different starting points around the town, depending on the direction."

The distinct landscapes of the Cotswolds, Wiltshire Downs and Salisbury Plain are all within striking distance, and a GPX file uploaded on the club's website allows everyone to know where they're going.

Everyone welcome

A number of other riders out on the run today have similarly taken up cycling in the last five or six years. Many of them were introduced to the club through traffic-free group riding sessions at the Castle Combe

Club facts

Based: Chippenham, Wiltshire

Members: 523

Formed: 1932

Meets: Tuesday: youth TT;

Wednesday evening: TT; Saturday

morning: chaingang and leisure

ride; Sunday morning: club ride.

Various locations (see club website)

motor circuit on Tuesday evenings. There is also racing there on Thursdays.

We skim close to Castle Combe as we head north and cross the M4. We pass through pretty stone villages and along ribbons of narrow tarmac between muddy fields.

As well as a strong racing history, the club also has form in Audax riding and last year was ranked among the top 10 clubs in the country. "Some of us rode to Oxford and back the other weekend, which was 185km," explains Jason Webb. "I'm doing Paris-Brest-Paris this year, so will be getting a lot more miles in."

Steve Wallace, meanwhile, is just pleased to be back on his bike for the mere 30-odd ▶

History

Chippenham and District Wheelers formed in 1932 from the ashes of the struggling Red Triangle Club, writes Rob McCallum. In 1968 it joined with the Chippenham Coureurs, a local school club. From here it enjoyed an annual membership of around 100 members, up until just after the turn of the millennium.

The period between the late Seventies and the early Nineties is seen as the heyday of the club in terms of its racing achievements. The late Gary Woodward and Keith Wright came second and third in the 1979 12-hour National Time Trial Championship, before Bob and Kate Crisp broke numerous

national tandem records in the late Eighties. Andy Cook, who went on to ride for Great Britain, then won a bronze in the 24-hour National Championships in 1990.

Nurturing ethos

The club prides itself on supporting young riders and was awarded Clubmark status by British Cycling in 2008, in recognition of this. Although not strictly Chippenham and District Wheelers events, use of Castle Combe has been pivotal in transforming the club. Cook, who is now club chairman, says: "The use of the racing track is why the club has been as successful as it is.

"It's given us the facility to develop people, teaching and

training important techniques. It has meant that the club in the last eight years or so has just grown and grown and grown."

From its humble beginnings the club now offers a comprehensive programme of riding and training, seeing annual membership rise substantially. Cook says: "For me it is the emphasis on it being a really friendly, welcoming club. With 523 members, I don't think we're doing too bad for a small market town in Wiltshire."

Achievements

■ Gary Woodward, 4th BBAR 1978

■ Gary Woodward, Stan Mills and Keith Wright, 2nd Team BBAR 1978

■ Bob and Kate Crisp, National records at tandem 10, 30, 50 and 100 miles, late 1980s

■ Andy Cook, 3rd 24-hour National Championship 1990

■ Jeff Jones, 1st BBAR 2011



Chippenham Wheelers club run

Ride highlights

1 Grittleton

A turreted lodge house fronted by spherical bushes and evenly spaced bollards sits on the corner. Trim verges, smart hedges and towering trees all add to the neat feel.

2 Badminton

This is the home of the equestrian trials. The dinky lanes round here are marvellously quiet — except in early May when you won't be able to move for Land Rovers and horse boxes.

3 Sherston

With a broad main street of old stone buildings surrounded by a network of lanes, this village has been a spectacular location for a local road race — and an unlikely love nest for Marvin Gaye.

Favourite cafe

The warm temperature and comfy chairs of the Angel Tea Rooms (High St, Sherston, Wiltshire, SN16 0LH; tel 01666 840039; www.sherstonangel.co.uk) are just the ticket after a bit of exposure to the elements in the Wiltshire lanes. With a cafe that only opened last April, this refurbished 17th century coaching inn with its boutique stylings offers welcome to mud-splattered two-wheeled travellers. On offer is breakfast sourced from their smallholding, delicious homemade cakes and, should you get too comfortable, rooms to spend the night in!





Braving the muddy Wiltshire wilds



The feeling returns to freezing fingers



Time to warm up and eat up

miles we're riding today. Last May he was hospitalised for over a month when a tractor pulled out in front of him during a time trial. "I was just getting into racing," he explains. The long list of injuries he suffered included a punctured lung, broken ribs, a ruptured spleen and a fractured pelvis.

But he enjoys his riding far too much to have been put off cycling by the incident.

The cafe at Sherston offers welcome respite from

the damp conditions, not to mention tea, cake and a chance to gain further insight into the backgrounds of the Chippenham's membership.

Inclusivity is the club's watchword and it offers a rich programme of activities, including closed-circuit youth time trials and easy leisure rides.

Sat around a table, a small group of more senior members that call themselves the BOFs — boring old farts — swap cycling anecdotes.

"There were only about 20 members when I joined the club in 1968," explains long-time member John Else — whose wife, daughter and son are all also members.

"A bit later we held about 100 members for a long while, but recently it's rocketed to over 500. I think that's down to offering more than racing. A lot of people just want to ride. A lot of families are interested because we cater for the kids. Really, there's something for everyone."

Meet the club



Brian Jenkins: "It's a very family-orientated club, but when I used the word family, I mean everyone is like a member of a family: the Chippenham Wheelers club."



Tracey Kite: "The Castle Combe rides cater for everyone. We went there to take the kids then got involved ourselves."



Rob Wild: "I joined about three years ago when I retired from the fire service. I did a ride down to Toulouse then I looked to the club for a group to ride with."



Sue Jeffery: "Doing the chaingang really helped bring me on so I would always recommend joining a club to anyone."

GB track team flop in France



Squad leave Worlds with no golds, 18 months away from Rio

Words: Simon Richardson Photos: Andy Jones

The Rio Olympics start in 526 days and the British cycling team has a mountain to climb. Three silver medals from this year's World Track Championships in Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, west of Paris, is their worst medal haul in 14 years.

Aside from the improvements made by the men's team pursuitters to get back to where they were and finish second to New Zealand, the British team returned a series of lacklustre mid-field performances over a hugely competitive five days of racing. As other teams proved they have made significant gains, GB has at best stagnated. This for the second best-funded Olympic sport in the country.

The biggest problem facing British Cycling's coaching staff is the performances of the sprint squads. Over eight events their best placing was eighth. Eighth place in the men's team sprint puts them sixth in Europe behind France, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia and Poland. Only five European teams can qualify for Rio 2016.

There was much talk of 'making gains', 'galvanising the team' and 'moving forward', but while there were fast times (on an extremely fast track), the British sprinters were not in the races.

In the individual events, triple Olympic champion Jason Kenny was well off the pace, finishing at the back of the pack in the keirin and dumped

"My belief in Jason Kenny remains. We are still competitive in the keirin and sprint"

out of the first round of the sprint by Venezuelan rider Hersony Canelón.

"My belief in Jason Kenny remains, and I believe we are still very competitive in keirin and sprint," Shane Sutton, BC's technical director said of GB's biggest underachiever. After his keirin performance Kenny joked he was rubbish at winning anything other than Olympic medals. The question will be whether or not he can lift himself from this slump in time for the next Games.

"One of the key factors to the rise of Jason Kenny was because every day he was coming in and he was competing against the man himself [Sir Chris Hoy]," Sutton said. "They were beating each other up on a daily basis. He doesn't have that any more. Jason needs to race a bit more."

Make the best of it

The women's sprint is the one area where Sutton admitted: "At this moment in time, the gap probably can't be closed. I don't want to put any pressure on Becky James [who is out with injury]. If she comes back, then yes, the gap's doable. But at this moment in time, without Becky, the gap's not closable."

For the first time in two Games cycles, the team has

few 'left fielders': the young riders who shoot up through the system in the final 12 months and force themselves into the team. Kenny did it in Beijing, and Laura Trott in London, but there seems little chance of one emerging for Rio.

"The tools we've now got available to us are what we've got, and we have to do the best job we can with them," Sutton said. "Don't expect Callum Skinner at his age to step up and do the job Sir Chris Hoy did. He needs time to develop."

Eighteen-year-old Matt Gibson — who placed a brilliant sixth in the scratch race in Paris — could make the team pursuit squad, of which 21-year-old Owain Doull is now a key member. Sir Bradley Wiggins's return has been much publicised, Ben Swift has committed to the track after this season, and then there's Mark Cavendish.

The Manxman is likely to leave his final decision on a return until after the Tour de France, and it won't have escaped his notice that the young rider who won the omnium in Paris was the same one that beat him twice at the Tour de San Luis last month.

The men's endurance squad has, however, rallied. After posting their worst performance in over a decade at last year's



Kenny: off the pace

74.681kmh

Average speed of fastest sprint qualifier Stefan Botticher (Ger)

4:04

The schedule Jack Bobridge set out on in the IP final

38

Countries at the Track World Championships

2.869sec

Amount of time Australia took off the women's TP world record

11

Number of world titles Anna Meares (Aus) has now won



Other nations have caught and passed the Brits

Track shorts

Cameras on bikes

Live onboard footage was beamed from the back of a competitor's bike for the first time in history last week. Production company HBS built four bespoke cameras that were fitted to seatpins — via a custom-made 3D printed bracket — in certain races, and the footage was included in the event coverage. Julien Bertin of HBS who managed the project said the technology would definitely be used in road racing in the future.

Cookson on track

Brian Cookson flew to Rio after the Track Worlds to check on the velodrome in Brazil amid reports there is little to see. It's not the only problem facing the track programme. Venues for next winter's World Cup series are unconfirmed and the format is struggling. "It's fair to say the World Cup is not an ideal format as it stands at the moment. Post Rio we will have a different system," the UCI president said.

Fast track Hour record

The new track in Saint-

Quentin-en-Yvelines was designed to be the fastest in the world. With big wide bankings, minimal straights meaning gentle transitions between the two, it produced some excellent pursuit times. The sprinters were able to use the extra height of this eight-metre-wide track (London is seven metres) and a banking angle of 43.8 degrees to gain speed. In sprint qualifying, 25 men went under 10 seconds, a figure that's almost unheard of. Chris Boardman noted it was a near perfect track for the Hour record.

Irvine under pressure

Ireland's Martyn Irvine shoulders the burden of Olympic qualification — and by virtue of the team's funding, alone. Irvine finished 17th in the omnium. "The Worlds are probably a bad comeback race," he said, after two crashes last autumn. His result in Paris was crucial for Rio qualification that he now admits is only an outside possibility. Ryan Mullen rode in the individual pursuit (a non-Olympic event) and Caroline Ryan finished 15 in the women's omnium.

Worlds, they were a whisker away from a gold medal last week. Just five weeks after Steven Burke broke his collarbone and Doull was 'cut to ribbons' in a training crash, both went under the 3-55 mark — the first time GB have done so since 2012.

Sutton was full of praise too for Heiko Salzwedel, who took over the team in October last year, and was confident that a few minor changes could have resulted in a gold medal.

Taste of defeat

The British women lost in an international team pursuit for the first time in four years. They put a brave face on it and suggested it may help by taking the target off their back and give them something to chase.

"We've got Paul Manning back as our coach now," Trott said. "There are a few changes in the coaching team and once all that settles down again, and we start to see some of the Olympic equipment come back out, I think you'll see us come back up again."

She was, however, acutely aware of the challenge now facing them. Australia took three seconds off the world record as they comfortably beat Trott and co, a result of a change in their coaching back-up and bringing them all under one roof to live and train together.

"The lap speed they must have had to do a 4-13 is something we haven't touched in training yet. Hats off to them," Trott said.

Joanna Rowsell, a double world champion last year, was struggling in Paris after peaking a month ago before trying to hold on to her form. "I was part of the team that was beaten in the World Championships in 2010 and that was just over two years out from London," she

"There'll be a lot of people concerned about how they'll make up the deficit"

said. "At the time it was the best thing that could have happened to us. We completely changed our training and the structure of the programme."

Concern from coaches

Despite the common sense reasoning and explanations, former team member Victoria Pendleton said there was no doubt there would be worry in the squad. "There'll be a lot of people concerned about how on earth they're going to make up the deficit and get themselves in that leading position again," she said.

Pendleton went through three Olympic cycles in her career with GB, at the beginning of her career, through her peak and then latterly, as she held on through injury and a disabling hatred of the pressure of international competition.

In Paris with the BBC, she knew GB has one powerful card still to play. "In terms of scheduling performances, we've proved that we can get it right. No other country prepares better for the Olympics than we do," she said.

World Championships winners and losers



On the up New Zealand

The All Blacks have been a revelation with a stunning ride in the team pursuit (their first) and can stake a claim to being moral winners of the team sprint. They were relegated in the final after beating the French and there was talk of a false start for France that wasn't called. Will be a genuine force in Rio.

Russia

Two gold medals for Russia was a great return for the team that has so far failed to put their huge funding to good use. Anastasia Voynova won the 500m TT by a good margin and took silver in the team sprint with Daria Shmeleva. Voynova came close to beating Kristina Vogel in the sprint quarters, too. Denis Dmitriev won silver in the men's sprint, and Russia took gold in the men's points race.

Netherlands

The Dutch dropped off the track cycling radar after 2006 when Theo Bos looked set to dominate men's sprinting for years. Now, thanks to Elis Ligtlee they may have their next star. The 20-year-old outpaced all but Kristina Vogel in the women's sprint. Kirsten Wild also took gold in the scratch race and Jeffrey Hoogland is ever improving in the men's sprint.

Australia

Although they won the most medals, this was mainly down to the women's squad. The endurance team put a rider on the podium for all but one of their events with Amy Cure winning three medals. Anna Meares won her 11th world title. Glenn O'Shea took silver in the omnium, and Jack Bobridge did the same in the individual pursuit, but the male sprinters

were off the mark with sixth in team sprint qualifying, and without a rider in the keirin or sprint finals, while the men's team pursuit looked some way off the standard they have set since London 2012.

France

For the first few days the team looked like it was relying on the flying François Pervis to bring home all their golds. Then on the final afternoon Grégory Baugé took back his sprint title in impressive fashion and they won the Madison. Cheered by a home crowd no doubt helped *Les Bleus*, but their female riders are miles off the pace — several of their medals came in non-Olympic events and historically they have not managed to tailor their riders' training to a four-year cycle. Yet it was a good start for the team's new home, and their plans to mimic the BC system.



Going down Great Britain

The best-funded nation in the sport came up well short on the medal table, posting their worst medal tally since 2001. A performance like this a year after the Olympics could be understandable, but with 18 months to go to Rio there will be genuine concern in the ranks.

Germany

The all-conquering Miriam Welte and Kristina Vogel failed to medal in the team sprint, as the Russian and Chinese sprinters stepped up and over them. Vogel defended her sprint title, but wasn't as dominant as in 2014, while their male counterparts delivered silver in the kilometre. No German sprinters made the quarter-finals of the men's sprint. Both their golds came in (non-Olympic) endurance events.

Pervis took two
golds in front of
his home crowd



RESULTS

MEN

Team Sprint

- 1 France
- 2 New Zealand
- 3 Germany

Sprint

- 1 Grégory Baugé (Fra)
- 2 Denis Dmitriev (Rus)
- 3 Quentin Lafargue (Fra)

Keirin

- 1 François Pervis (Fra)
- 2 Edward Dawkins (NZI)
- 3 Azizulhasni Awang (Mal)

1km time trial

- 1 François Pervis (Fra)
- 2 Joachim Eilers (Ger)
- 3 Matthew Archibald (NZI)

Team pursuit

- 1 New Zealand
- 2 Great Britain
- 3 Australia

Individual pursuit

- 1 Stefan Küng (Sui)
- 2 Jack Bobridge (Aus)
- 3 Julien Morice (Fra)

Scratch race

- 1 Lucas Liss (Ger)
- 2 Albert Torres (Esp)
- 3 Bobby Lea (USA)

Points race

- 1 Artur Ershov (Rus)
- 2 Eloy Teruel (Esp)
- 3 Maximilian Beyer (Ger)

Omnium

- 1 Fernandez Gaviria (Col)
- 2 Glenn O'Shea (Aus)
- 3 Elia Viviani (Ita)

Madison

- 1 France
- 2 Italy
- 3 Belgium

WOMEN

Team Sprint

- 1 China
- 2 Russia
- 3 Australia

Sprint

- 1 Kristina Vogel (Ger)
- 2 Elis Ligtlee (Ned)
- 3 Tianshi Zhong (Chn)

Keirin

- 1 Anna Meares (Aus)
- 2 Shanne Braspennincx (Ned)
- 3 Lisandra Guerra (Cub)

500m time trial

- 1 Anastasia Voynova (Rus)
- 2 Anna Meares (Aus)
- 3 Miriam Welte (Ger)

Team pursuit

- 1 Australia
- 2 Great Britain
- 3 Canada

Individual pursuit

- 1 Rebecca Wiasak (Aus)
- 2 Jennifer Valente (USA)
- 3 Amy Cure (Aus)

Scratch race

- 1 Kirsten Wild (Ned)
- 2 Amy Cure (Aus)
- 3 Allison Beveridge (Can)

Points race

- 1 Stephanie Pohl (Ger)
- 2 Minami Uwano (Jpn)
- 3 Kimberly Geist (USA)

Omnium

- 1 Annette Edmondson (Aus)
- 2 Laura Trott (GBR)
- 3 Kirsten Wild (Ned)

MEDAL TABLE

Country	G	S	B	Total
1 France	5	0	2	7
2 Australia	4	4	3	11
3 Germany	3	3	1	7
4 Russia	2	2	0	4
=5 Netherlands	1	2	1	4
=5 New Zealand	1	2	1	4
Other				
10 Great Britain	0	3	0	3

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Top three for One

One Pro Cycling dominated the podium at the Clayton Spring Classic, snatching their second 1-2-3 of the season, as Peter Williams took the win on a rolling Clitheroe circuit on Sunday.

Williams, 25, soloed away from the scratch group in the 58-mile handicap race. The Skipton-based rider caught up with the longmarkers before riding on to victory.

Around a minute behind Williams, team-mate Sam Williams led the chasing group ahead of another One Pro Cycling rider Josh Hunt, with David McGowan (Pedal Heaven) fourth and junior Robert Scott (VCUK PH-Mas Junior CT) fifth.

"I just kept my head down and kept going," said Williams afterwards. "I got across to the juniors on my own then stayed away. I built up a comfortable lead which allowed my team-mates behind to just sit on which worked perfectly."

One Pro Cycling also secured a 1-2-3 two weeks ago when Yanto Barker took victory in the Perfs Pedal Race, ahead of team-mates Chris Opie and Marcin Bialoblocki.

Not one to be outdone by his team-mates, Bialoblocki raced to a solo victory in the Primavera Road Race in Devon on Sunday, crossing the line 3.45 ahead of Alex Murison (Easton Ritte) after attacking alone with 18 miles to go.

Elsewhere, former National Time Trial Series champion Dean Robson was



Williams took the win in Clitheroe

a comfortable winner at the Severn RC 25, near Stone in Gloucestershire on Sunday.

Robson (Cheltenham and County CC) finished the U17 course in 55.56, comfortably ahead of runner-up Billy Oliver (Bikescience) who stopped the clock at 58.42. Robson's team-mate Harry Walton took third place just six seconds down on Oliver.

Also on Sunday, the North Road Hardriders 25-mile event in Hertfordshire was cancelled because of icy roads around the course.

Team Swift were dominant at the Yorkshire CF 10 in Brotherton, North Yorkshire. As well as winning the team prize, Andy Jackson was fastest senior with 21.27, team-mate Jo Blackburn clocked 24.59 to top the women's category with a course record, and Team Swift also won the team prize.

Matt Sinclair (Lutterworth Cycle Centre) won the Coalville Wheelers 10 at Griffydham in Leicestershire on Saturday. His time of 21.44 was enough to see off the challenge of Derby Mercury's Adam Kenway and Loughborough University rider Jonny Wales.

Time trials

Sunday, February 22

Severn RC 25 (Stone, Gloucestershire):

Solo:

1. Dean Robson (Cheltenham and County CC)	55.56
2. B. Oliver (Bikescience/Boardman Elite).....	58.42
3. H. Walton (Cheltenham and County CC).....	58.48
4. K. Moseley (Stourbridge Velo).....	59.00
5. T. Chapman (Frome and Dist Wheelers).....	59.12
6. M. Davis (Dursley RC).....	59.44
7. P. Jones (Dursley RC).....	1:00.26
8. P. Coles (Chippenhams & District Wh).....	1:00.47
9. X. Disley (RST Sport/Aero-Coach).....	1:00.55
10. J. Cartridge (73 Degrees Bicycles).....	1:01.48

2-Up:

1. Ashley Martin (Team Tor 2000) and Ben Anstie (73 Degree Bicycles)	55.05
2. M. Lelliot (Severn RC) and J. Russell (Bristol RC).....	59.19
3. R. Gilling and C. Beardshaw (Performance Cycles).....	1:00.14

King's Cliffe Flyers CC 12 (King's Cliffe, Peterborough):

1. George Fox (King's Cliffe Flyers)	26.46
2. P. Cocker (Pedalpushers Bikeshop).....	27.39
3. S. Wright (Planet X RT).....	28.39
4. C. Whitwell (St Ives CC).....	28.40
5. K. Woolf (King's Cliffe Flyers).....	28.47
6. P. Cox (Pedal Power Loughborough).....	29.15
7. S. Wood (Peterborough CC).....	29.33
8. A. Roffe (Team Salesengine.co.uk).....	29.46
9. S. Pitchford (Fenland Clarion CC).....	30.04
10. H. Hocknell (Team Salesengine.co.uk).....	30.39
Women: Keira McVitty (Giordana Triton).....	33.05
2-Up: Phil Rayner and Michael Burke (Welland Valley CC).....	27.55

City Cycle Couriers RT 10.5 (Ermington, Devon):

1. Chris Vellacott (Royal Navy Royal Marines CA)	24.48
2. A. Gittin (Alltrax).....	24.54
3. N. Todd (Tavistock Wheelers).....	24.58
4. T. Moran (Plymouth Corinthian CC).....	25.09
5. R. Scott (City Cycle Couriers RT).....	25.10
6. P. Walshe (City Cycle Couriers RT).....	25.21
7. M. Earl (Plymouth Corinthian CC).....	25.38
8. B. Moss (Royal Navy Royal Marines CA).....	25.46
9. N. Harwood (Revo Racing).....	26.02
10. A. Parnowski (Alltrax).....	26.19
Women: Crystal Spearman (Revo Racing).....	26.22
Over-40s: Barry Moss (Royal Navy Royal Marines CA).....	25.46
Juniors: Chris Weymouth (City Cycle Couriers RT).....	33.45

Yorkshire CF 10 (Brotherton, North Yorks):

1. Andy Jackson (Team Swift)	21.27
2. J. Wears (Team Jewson).....	22.13
3. D. Mullier (Harrogate Nova).....	22.34
4. B. Metcalf (Team Swift).....	22.49
5. R. Krygsman (Team Swift).....	23.13
6. R. Sharp (York Cycleworks).....	23.24
=7. G. McIntosh (Alba Rosa CC).....	23.26
=7. D. Hart (Ilkley CC).....	23.26
9. M. Cross (Yorkshire RC).....	23.43
10. N. Allatt (Holmfirth CC).....	23.49
Team: Team Swift (Jackson, Metcalf, Krygsman).....	1:07.29
Veterans: Duncan Mullier	
Women: Jo Blackburn (Team Swift).....	24.59
Juniors: Nathan Allatt (Holmfirth CC)	

Saturday, February 21

Coalville Wheelers 10 (Griffydham, Leics):

1. Matt Sinclair (Lutterworth Cycle Centre)	21.44
2. A. Kenway (Derby Mercury RC).....	22.06
3. J. Wale (Loughborough Univ CC).....	22.10
4. M. Woods (Banjo Cycles).....	22.17
5. P. Nicholls (PB Performance).....	22.34
6. S. Eden (Mapperley CC).....	22.38
7. M. Morgan (Derby Mercury RC).....	22.43
8. T. Ward (Loughborough Students CC).....	22.45
9. J. Hedley-Smith (Pedal Power).....	22.53
10. K. Moseley (Stourbridge Velo).....	22.57

Veterans:

Karl Moseley

Women: Sarah King (Morvelo).....25.26

Veteran women: Lindsay Nell

(Team Jewson-MI Racing).....29.21

Juniors: Ellie Armstrong (PB Performance).....29.29

Team: Derby Mercury RC (Adam Kenway, Mark Morgan, Guy Webster).....1:09.17

Sunday, February 15

Frome and District Wheelers 10 (Nunney, Somerset):

1. Rob Pears (Pro Cycling RT)	20.35
2. D. Woodhouse (CC Ashwell).....	21.15
3. A. Martin (Team Tor 2000).....	21.42
4. S. Cottingham (Cadence RT).....	21.43
5. C. Rees (Gillingham & District Wheelers).....	21.47
6. T. Walker (VC Walcot).....	21.49
7. J. Coleman (VC Walcot).....	21.49
8. A. Macalister (Somerset RC).....	21.56
9. J. Hollins (Bath Univ CC).....	22.05
10. T. Chapman (Frome and Dist Wh).....	22.14

Veterans on std: Steve Cottingham.....+5.11

Juniors: James Hywell-Davies

(Gillingham & Dist Wheelers).....24.09

Women: Karen Michelle Spiteri

(Salt & Sham SAS).....27.53

Frome and Dist Wheelers: Madeline Howden

(Gillingham and Dist Wh).....30.22

Road racing

Sunday, February 22

Primavera Road Race (Okehampton, Devon):

E/1/2/3: 1. Marcin Bialoblocki (One Pro Cycling)	53 miles in 2:10.30;
2. A. Murison (Eastern Ritte)	+3.45;
3. C. Croft (Primera)	+3.50;
4. A. Feather (Bikeshed)	+3.55;
5. M. Lees (Tanks Direct)	+5.30;
6. H. Fielding (unattached)	+6.45;
7. A. Williams (Cwmcam Paragon CC);	8. J. Jones (Bikeshed);
9. B. Davis (unattached);	10. R. Harris (Cwmcam Paragon CC)
all same time. Prime 1: M. Bialoblocki. Prime 2: M. Bialoblocki. Prime 3: M. Bialoblocki.	
3/4 Cat: 1. Jake Hollins (Univ of Bath CC)	53 miles in 2:20.10;
2. L. Bromily (Univ of Bath CC)	+1.40;
3. O. George (Team Tor 2000)	+2.00;
4. C. Hickson (Mid-Devon CC)	+4.40.

Women: 1. Ellis Gilham (Primera Sports)

28 miles in 1:21.42; 2. E. Twentyman (Univ of Bath CC); 3. M. McFadzean (GB Cycles); 4. G. Taylor (Fusion Gear Club); 5. H. Veils (Somerset RC); 6. S. Goodwin (Somerset RC); 7. N. Noble (unattached); 8. B. Stubbs (Bikeshed); 9. A. Sheehan (Bikeshed); 10. K. Paul (Lanhydrock Wheelers).

Clayton Spring Classic (Clitheroe):

E/1/2/3/4: 1. Peter Williams (One Pro Cycling)

58.4 miles in 2:25.51; 2. S. Williams (One Pro Cycling); 3. J. Hunt (One Pro Cycling); 4. D. McGowan (Pedal Heaven RT); 5. R. Scott (VCUK PH-MAS Junior RT); 6. A. Hartley (VCUK PH-MAS Junior RT); 7. A. Rutherford (The Nab Racing); 8. J. Lawless (Team Monda-Anon); 9. S. Wilson (Team Polypipe); 10. G. Atkins (One Pro Cycling).

Saturday, February 21

Velo29 Winter Series 2015 Round 6 (N. Yorkshire):

E/1/2/3/4: 1. David Bolland (Clay Cross) 29.8 miles in 1:16:06; 2. G. Bourne (Achieve Northside Skinnergate); 3. A. Scorey (Berwick Wheelers); 4. B. Hetherington (Achieve Northside Skinnergate); 5. P. Vernie (Loughborough Students CC); 6. C. Humphrey (Achieve Northside Skinnergate); 7. R. Moore (Squadra RT); 8. J. Rees (Achieve Northside Skinnergate); 9. C. Mather (M Steel Cycles); 10. J. Varley (unattached).

Women 2/3/4: 1. Seonaid Thompson (Alba Rosa CC) 13.6m in 44:51.2; 2. E. McDermott (Team WattCycle); 3. A. Hibbs (Team WattCycle); 4. H. Righini-Brand (unattached); 5. V. Hood (Team Jadan); 6. G. Sargent (Evans Cycles RT); 7. C. Marshall (Team WattCycle); 8. L. Atkinson-Wright (Alba Rosa CC); 9. E. Stedman (University of Sheffield CC); 10. J. Batey (Team WattCycle).

4th Cat: 1. Wilson Remwick (Harwick CC) 15.5 miles in 43:41.6; 2. A. Ashton (Alba Rosa CC); 3. P. Roebuck (Scarborough VYH Training); 4. S. Massey (Team WattCycle); 5. D. Beattie (Harwick CC); 6. D. Cordiner (Durham University CC); 7. B. Hamilton (Stockton Wheelers); 8. D. Slater (Berwick Wheelers); 9. C. Tidd (Team WattCycle); 10. M. Keedy (South Shields Velo).

South East League Winter Series, round 4 (Cyclopark, Kent)

E/1/2/3/4: 1. Joshua Outram (SP-Torm); 2. B. Whennan (TBW Bottecchia); 3. A. Ellison (TBW Bottecchia); 4. M. Clarke (London Dynamo); 5. D. Egan (Kingston Wheelers); 6. J. Sutton (PMR to Ioachim House); 7. W. Beba (Adalta CC); 8. K. Watson (Adalta CC); 9. J. McCann (Catford CC-Equipe Banks); 10. M. Barnett (Corley Cycles Drops RT).

Ludgershall Winter Series, round 8 (Wiltts):

E/1/2/3: 1. Matt Bone (Danny Shane-Storck Racing) in 55:30; 2. J. Caldwell (Richardsons-Trek); 3. T. Harkness (Maison Du Velo-Storck); 4. D. Lancashire (Andover Wheelers); 5. D. Billings (VC St Raphael); 6. A. Thompson (Reading CC); 7. T. Key (Southampton Univ RC) all same time; 8. R. Ward (Danny Shane-Storck Racing) +0:30; 9. J. Hales (unattached); 10. Harrison Fielding (unattached) all st.

3rd Cat: 1. Joseph Andrews (Eden Vernada RT) in 44:30; 2. J. Hales (unattached); 3. L. Bromiley (Univ of Bath CC); 4. S. Calder (Beeline Bicycles RT); 5. H. McNaughton (i-Team CC); 6. W. Crofts (Performance Cycles); 7. R. McGrath (Army CU); 8. C. Burns (Welwyn Wheelers); 9. A. Hibberd (North Hampshire RC); 10. S. Robinson (VC St Raphael).

4th Cat (Even): 1. Edward Wu (Sotonia CC) in 34:00; 2. C. McCaughley (unattached); 3. W. Blunt (Army CU); 4. L. Henderson (Andover Wheelers); 5. T. Meir (unattached); 6. O. Woods (E3 Coach.com); 7. S. Pellowe (SD Racing Team); 8. S. Solehall (Univ of Brighton CC); 9. W. Shawyer (Abbots Ann Cycles); 10. D. Laval (Odiham CC).

4th Cat (Odd): 1. Robert Baird (Blazing Saddles) in 34:00; 2. M. Holloway (Veloton); 3. A. McIntoch (Cotswold Veldrijden); 4. P. Ganderton (Reading CC); 5. M. Champion (Southampton Univ RC); 6. W. Gregory (Performance Cycles); 7. T. Cooke (Sotonia CC); 8. C. Barritt (Southampton Univ RC); 9. S. Walters (VC Venta); 10. M. Wells (Outdoor Traders CC).

Women: 1. Tamara Davenne (Zappi's RT) in 44:00; 2. J. Tindley (Team WNT); 3. L. Ackland (Zappi's RT); 4. C. Sampson (Zappi's RT); 5. J. Milward (Zappi's RT); 6. D. Short (Army CU); 7. A. Huibers (Zappi's RT); 8. E. Campbell (Bournemouth Jubilee Wheelers); 9. E. Lyons (Zappi's RT); 10. A. Dobbs (E3 RT).

Sunday, February 15

Team Tor 2000 Spring Circuit Races (Torbay Velopark, Devon):

2/3/4: Andy Hitchens (Mid Devon CC); 2. K. Jasper (unattached); 3. C. Revell (Somerset RC); 4. S. Barker (Bikeshed); 5. J. Ibbotson (Exeter Wheelers); 6. S. Dickens (Giant CC); 7. O. Yates (Royal Navy Royal Marines CA); 8. N. John (Somerset RC); 9. J. Pitocco (Mid Devon CC); 10. T. Moran (Plymouth Corinthian CC).

4th Cat: 1. Craig Reynolds (Exeter Wheelers); 2. S. Woods (Plymouth Corinthian CC); 3. C. Jenkins (unattached); 4. T. Prowse (Mid Devon CC); 5. A. Flynn (Plymouth Corinthian CC); 6. M. Coombe (Mid Devon CC); 7. P. McSweeney (Royal Navy Royal Marines CA); 8. A. Dawson (Bikemotion Racing); 9. A. Middlebrooke (Exeter Wheelers); 10. B. Davies (Exeter Wheelers).

Women: Nicola Noble (unattached).

Thursday, February 12

Dulwich Paragon Winter Series, round 3 (Lee Valley Cycle Circuit):

2/3: 1. Mark McCullagh (Dulwich Paragon CC); 2. V. Blazejovsky (Brixton Cycles); 3. J. Puleston-Jones (Dulwich Paragon CC); 4. T. Hargreaves (London Dynamo); 5. J. Freeman (Dulwich Paragon CC); 6. N. Davis (Kingston Wheelers CC); 7. P. Martin (WyndyMilla); 8. B. Knapp (Dulwich Paragon CC); 9. H. Paine (Corley Cycles-Drops RT); 10. T. Harkness (Mason Du Velo-Storck Bikes UK).

4th Cat: 1. Dominic Munson (Dulwich Paragon CC); 2. G. Hayes (Dulwich Paragon CC); 3. W. Becker (unattached); 4. C. Newton (Folkestone Velo Club); 5. J. Fisher (Dulwich Paragon CC); 6. L. Woolfson (Islington CC); 7. W. Morton (Rapha CC); 8. T. Herbert (Kingston Wheelers); 9. N. Wood

(BowlPhish BONTRAGER); 10. T. Griffith (Dulwich Paragon CC).

Women 2/3/4: 1. Nicole Oh (Les Filles Racing Team); 2. A. Woznicka (unattached); 3. E. Fudge (Dulwich Paragon CC); 4. G. Leveridge (Velosure Starley); 5. S. Edmondson (Kinoko Cycles); 6. C. Goodman (Kinoko Cycles); 7. C. Heywood (unattached); 8. K. Morris (Dulwich Paragon CC); 9. C. Hammond (London Dynamo); 10. Libby Gordon (Dulwich Paragon CC).

Track racing

Tuesday, February 17

Manchester Regional Track League (Premier Division):

40-Lap Scratch Race: 1. Matt Rotherham (Sportcity Velo) 12.07 (5pts); 2. J. Partington (unattached) 3; 3. A. Rutherford (The Nab Racing) 2; 4. M. Woffindin (Cycle Sport Pendle) 1.
50-Lap Points Race: 1. Richard Lang (JLT Condor) 15:47 (5pts); 2. A. Rutherford 3; 3. J. Partington 2; 4. M. Woffindin 1.

Elimination Race: Matt Rotherham 5.00.407 (5pts); 2. R. Lang 3; 3. T. Rotherham (Sportcity Velo) 2; 4. D. Brearley (Team Vortex) 1.

64-Lap Scratch Race: Richard Lang 19.54 (5pts); 2. A. Rutherford 3; 3. J. Partington 2; 4. J. Pearson (Team Moda-Anon) 1. Half Distance Sprint: Julian Pearson.

Overall (after week seven): Joel Partington 64 pts; 2. M. Rotherham 33; 3. R. Lang 30; 4. R. Wood (Velocity Globalbike) 30; 5. M. Walls (Velocity Globalbike) 29; 6. J. Escritt (HMT Academy) 27; 7. A. Rutherford 21; 8. M. Woffindin 15; 9. T. Rotherham 13; 10. J. Green (VC St Raphael) 11.

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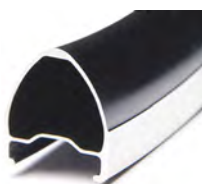
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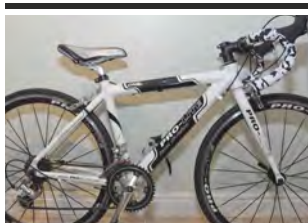
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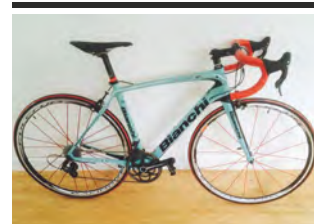
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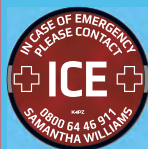


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From Belfast's Big Start to the arduous climbs of the Alps and the Dolomites, the 2014 Giro d'Italia had it all.

The Colombians came to the fore in the battle for the maglia rosa, with Nairo Quintana eventually overcoming Rigoberto Uran, as he realised his potential as a Grand Tour contender, while Frenchman Nacer Bouhanni took his chance to dominate in the battle of the sprinters.

Difficult weather conditions and even more difficult parcours made this edition of the Giro a fight to the very end, and certainly a race to remember

"It's really emotional, I didn't think there would be so many Colombians here today. It was incredible seeing how much support and how many banners there were. I've learnt to overcome adversity and to manage a team over three weeks, to be a leader."

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If you've ever watched *Top Gear* (and may Chris Boardman have mercy on your soul), you'll be familiar with the structure of a Jeremy Clarkson car review. They work one of two ways. The first is to start out with an explanation of why it's the best car he's ever driven, complete with smoking tyres and all the rest, and then say "but..." and explains why it's actually terrible. The second method is exactly the same, just the other way around. The formulae never vary.

The same logic applies here. If I start out this column by saying I went out for a lunchtime ride last week, and it was a lovely day for February, that there was just the first hint of spring warmth, and that I felt rested yet sharp, you'll know to look around for the incoming meteorite.

The day in question was just like

that. It was simply delightful. But wherever I went, I was surrounded on the roads by psychopaths. Honking, spitting, swerving... all the usual.

Round the bend

The copper-bottomed highlight, and the point of this whole column, was a man in a large grey Audi. He attempted to get past on a blind bend, and had to slam on the brakes to avoid hitting a car coming the other way. There followed a few more bends, which he clearly found very stressful indeed, because he flipped.

I was surprised at this, because it turned out he was a member of the SAS. I know because he wound down his window and shouted, "I'm in the SAS you ****." And I'd been under the impression that the SAS were trained not to completely lose their minds at things like a 20-second delay in traffic. But there you are, you learn something every day.

He shouted further, of his intention to follow me home, and to kill me and my family. I'd assumed that a covert organisation would favour something more subtle. But another lesson learned. He said he would accomplish this mass killing with his 'piece', which I imagine he was planning to hold sideways, like Ice Cube in *Boyz n the Hood*.

He drove along behind me for bloody miles, sounding the horn, revving the engine, raving about the SAS, and reiterating that he was going to kill me. He clearly had a much higher boredom threshold than I did,



Major grievance: road rage is the scourge of the cyclist

but I suppose that came from all the training.

Guardian psycho

After a while I stopped minding. Look at it this way, if he was actually going to kill me he'd have done it long since. And there was no danger of him running me down by accident either, since even if he could see nothing else on the road, he could certainly see me. And from a more general road safety point of view, no one else was conceivably going to fail to notice me — I was the cyclist with his own personal frothing psycho. Fluorescent jackets be damned, being followed around

Acts of Cycling Stupidity

Concerning my friend Bernard, who, all things considered, makes remarkably few appearances in this section.

He took some visiting friends out for a ride recently, and pulled a trick on them that he once pulled on me. Near his home, there is a ford, which is just around a blind bend. He swept at speed round the bend, and abruptly swerved onto the footpath to cross an adjacent bridge.

Caught by surprise, his visitors ploughed on into the ford. Which was quite high, and very slippery. They all fell off into a foot of water.

The stupid part is that one of his guests got caught out with this trick for the fifth (fifth!) time in consecutive visits.



“Fluorescent jackets be damned — I was a cyclist with his own personal psycho”

by a lunatic with a horn is how you draw attention to yourself.

He even added a few useful training miles, since I clearly wasn't going to take him home. Though I was very curious about what would happen if I did. It seemed very unlikely

that he was going to kill me, so he was going to have to climb down at some point. I thought about taking him to my friend Bernard's house, on the basis that if he was going to kick any gnomes, he might as well kick Bernie's. But I didn't.

Eventually I sneaked through an amber traffic light, and he stopped on the red. I mean, to a military man, killing is second nature but a red light is sacrosanct. He was probably more relieved than I was.

I must admit, I also suspect he might not actually have been a member of the SAS.

How to... avoid a multiple rider pile-up

Recent video evidence suggests that the most important measure to take if you don't want to risk finishing your ride in the midst of a vast pile-up of riders and machines, is to avoid riding in front of FDJ's Jérémy Roy. His collection of on-bike footage seems to consist entirely of mass carnage, which he invariably manages to just avoid.

Assuming you've looked over your shoulder and found it free of GoPro equipped Frenchmen, the next thing to do is to ride near the front of any bunch. A pile-up will not reach out and grab you from behind. Instead all you'll hear will be the delightful sound of muffled impacts and swearing. Don't look over your shoulder. It's bad karma.

Alternatively you can ride a very, very long way off the back of a bunch. Though, in truth, this is not as good an option as it looks, since you'll get stuck behind the pile-up anyway, and then you'll feel really bad about having to walk over people to get past it.

All of these rules apply to a commuter in a busy city. With the additional note that since the level of competitiveness and aggression is much higher among commuters than among bike racers, large crashes are much more likely.

Commuter pile-ups can also happen when stationary, since the further back in the bunch a rider was when he gets to the queue at the traffic lights, the more important it will be to him that he fight his way through to the front.



Impromptu games of Twister
don't optimise podium potential



The Muur

For many years, the cobbled Muur was the decisive climb of the Tour of Flanders

The Muur van Geraardsbergen, known simply as the Muur, was once the focal point in the Tour of Flanders. The race that all bike racing in Belgium revolves around hinged on this short stretch of road. It may not have launched the winning move each year, but this ferocious cobbled climb would shape the final selection of riders. Only the strongest riders with the energy and bravery to be at the front of the race would make it over the top in a position to contest the finale.

With rough, often slippery, cobbles and sections as steep as 19.8 per cent,

the Muur typifies a bullish style of racing that is uniquely Flemish.

The Muur first appeared in the 1950 Ronde, stayed on the race route for three years, then shared its race days with the cobbled Kloosterstraat.

From 1988 to 2011 the Muur was the penultimate climb in the Ronde, but in 2012 it was cut as the route was remodelled around the town of Oudenaarde, 25km to the north-west.

The talent filter

The tension of the Tour of Flanders would build towards the Muur as cobbled climb after cobbled climb shred the peloton of its weakest riders. Pros would judge their Flanders performance on whether they made it to the Muur in the first group — the mark of a good rider — or whether they were still there at the top — the mark of a genuine Classics

contender. The climb was the ultimate talent filter.

The Muur climbs in stages, changing direction, surface and gradient along the way, but only the top section is now cobbled. An old Ronde road book says the climb starts on Oudebergstraat, but really that's halfway up. The route through Geraardsbergen starts climbing immediately after the Dender bridge, and doesn't let up until the small chapel at the top of the man-made Kapelmuur.

A bronze statue representing Flemish bike fans called Wielervolk stands on the climb, as does a poem to Eddy Merckx, carved into a huge stone and written by a famous Flemish author.

The vicious cobbles at the top were re-laid in 2004 at a cost of 250,000 euros, as the old stones were dug up and sold for 2.5 euros each. Not much to pay for a little bit of Classics history.



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